THE DESMIER FAMILYHISTORY

AN ANGLO INDIAN FAMILY IN INDIA FOR MORE THAN 200 YEARS

REVISED FEBRUARY 2025

RICHARD EARLE DESMIER

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Richard Earle Desmier

2nd Edition 2025

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This book was produced by me using the open source photo-editing and word-processing software (Gimp and LibreOffice). Descendant tree charts were produced using the Brothers Keeper genealogy database program.

This is an expanded and updated version of the original publication dated 2020 and contains additional material. Many of the photographs from the first edition have been colourised using the MY Heritage genealogy program,. New sections have been added to include the Etridge and Chatelier families and there is an expanded section describing Helen (Jairag) Richardson's trek out of Burma to evade the Japanese troops during WW2.

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Winifred Desmier (1) her husband was a descendant of Edmond Alfred Desmier

Winifred Desmier (2) was the wife of Percival Desmier and still living in Trichinopoly until her death in 2008. She uncovered more information on that line of Desmiers from searches in graveyards and from her memory.

NAMES OF THE TOWNS AND CITIES REFERRED TO IN THIS BOOK AND THEIR CURRENT NOMENCLATURE

Old name	Modern Name
Bangalore	Bengaluru
Bombay	Mumbai
Bookasaga	Bukkasagara
Calcutta	Kolkata
Calicut	Kozhikode
Cannanore	Kannur
Chikmagalur	Chikkmagaluru
Cochin	Kochi
Ferozepur	Firozpur
Hospet	Hosapete
Hubli	Hubballi
Hyderabad, Sindh	Hyderabad
Madras	Chennai
Maymyo	Pyin Oo Lwin
Nagpore	Nagpur
Negapatam	Nagapattinam
Pondicherry	Puducherry
Poona	Pune
Rangoon	Yangon
Trichinopoly	Tiruchirappalli
Tuticorin	Thoothukudiion

BACKGROUND

The Desmiers in British India descend from a resident of the French colony of Pondicherry on the east coast of India. His descendant(s) probably became anglicised either when his mother remarried (although he kept his surname) or else they left Pondicherry during the period when it was under British rule. This puts him (or them) in the category of privateers and non-official residents in the country as at that time India was partly under the control of the East India Company (EIC) but also of the rulers of the many independent princely states and kingdoms. There were also other European countries that controlled small trading posts around the coast besides France and Britain. Portugal, The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Austria were the main countries.

Researching families that were in India during the last century and earlier cannot be undertaken using the same methods that are adopted for residents in Britain. No censuses were undertaken that identified families and occupations, Church records have not been indexed or digitised and neither have the majority of the newspapers of the time. There are comparatively good records for those engaged in military service, either for the East India Company (EIC) or the British army and for those higher ranking civil servants, however, the Desmiers, for the most part, do not belong to either of these categories.

In the 17th and much of the 18th century marriages were not usually solemnised in churches as they were few and far between. In larger settlements marriages would be performed by a chaplain attached to military bases and factories (trading posts). A christian marriage with a native woman could only occur once she had been entered into the Christian faith by being baptised. This could occur the week before the marriage at which time she would be given a European Christian name. More often an informal relationship ensued. Some directories and almanacs exist for the 19th century that list European residents in the different Presidencies but these are far from comprehensive. *Allen's Indian Mail* lists some births of children. Sometimes they are of the form …. *to the wife of captain XXX a son* and in other entries ….. *to the Lady of Captain XXX a son*. Rarely is the name of the child or wife/partner given.

Extracts of baptism, marriage and burial (BMD) details were required to be sent at regular intervals to London through either the EIC or, after the revolution of 1857, the British Government in India. It is these records (Ecclesiastical Returns) that form the backbone of any research into Anglo Indian ancestry and are now under the care of the British Library. This Library also holds other records related to the British occupation in India up to 1947 such as wills and government departmental records. Unfortunately the returns are just extracts and inevitably will contain transcription errors. It has been estimated that only about 75% of all BMD extracts were forwarded to London. The Desmiers followed the Catholic faith and many of their priests were of Portuguese or other non-British descent and did not always bother to follow directions from the hierarchy and so a lot of their returns fall into the missing 25%. Original records may well be kept in the churches in India, Pakistan Burma and Sri Lanka but accessing them is no easy matter. I have written and emailed some churches without receiving a reply. Digital copies of original extracts lodged at the British Library are available for viewing and downloading either from a Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS) Family History Centre or from the subscription genealogy database FindMyPast (FMP). They are two separate scans of the same dataset and so some records may have been missed in one and not the other. In addition, the FMP database includes records that have been transcribed from Indian newspapers by the Families In British India Society (FIBIS). These are transcriptions only and do not contain as much information as is usually found in the extracts but they may be all that is available online in some cases. The

subscription database Ancestry holds transcriptions only of the Ecclesiastical returns sent to the India Office. Ancestry also has online some unindexed directories concerning European inhabitants in India.

It is fortunate that 'Desmier' is an uncommon name as this makes some assumptions made about relationships more likely to be correct.

In this study I have not given a reference to every piece of information presented. Names, dates, locations and occupations have been taken from the ecclesiastical returns which I have either obtained as photocopies from the LDS holdings in Utah, USA, from the British Library directly or from the FMP online records. If I have obtained information from another source, such as a transcription of an extract, a directory/calendar/almanac entry or information from a descendant I have endeavoured to identify that source.

Descendant charts are included with each chapter. For those families that have a lot of descendants there are additional chapters as well as additional charts. I have given brief descriptions of the main towns and cities that the families lived in that have, in the main, been drawn from descriptions around the time that the families lived there. Maps are included where considered appropriate. Throughout I have used the names of towns that were in use in India before 1947. There is a brief list of towns and their modern names included on page 9.

I have intentionally not included the details of more recent generations of descendants for privacy reasons.

The first two chapters provide some context to the family history. The first summarises the history of India with respect to the growing presence of Europeans in the country. The second section summarises the development of the railway companies, the main employers of Anglo Indians in the 19th and 20th centuries. I have also included brief details of families that I have currently been unable to attach to any traceable group.

Chapter 1

COLONISATION OF INDIA BY EUROPEANS

There are many readily available documents and books that deal with the history of India in more detail and more accurately than I am capable of, or have attempted to achieve here in a couple of pages. This section is merely to provide some background as to why the Desmiers and the families that they lived worked and intermarried with came to be in India.

Spices have been traded between the Indian Subcontinent and the Middle East since before christian times. Turks, and Persians had travelled overland into north-west India. Arab ships had traded between the east coast of India and the Persian Gulf. People of various nationalities and religions had set themselves up as local merchants and exporters and had been largely tolerated by the indigenous races. Camel caravans would complete the trip across land to Mediterranean ports for onward distribution throughout the Grecian, and later the Roman Empire's lands. Egyptian ships could sail up the Red Sea.

Europeans were keen to bypass middle eastern traders and increase supply as well as make more profits. In 1492 Christopher Columbus, an Italian with Spanish backing, set off to find a sea route from Europe to India, but he found the Americas instead. In 1498 Vasco de Gama, from Portugal was the first European to successfully travel directly by sea around Africa to India. He was granted trading rights from a local ruler near Calicut. Over the next 100 years the Portuguese established several settlements in Southern India to supply their ships with goods such as spices, silks, and textiles. Portuguese men based in India were encouraged to marry Indian women and convert them to Christianity. In addition, orphan girls from Portugal were shipped out to India to provide wives. Goa, on the West Coast, became the capital of Portuguese India and remained a State of Portugal until 1961.

Other European nations followed the Portuguese to India to get their share of the trade. A Dutch East India Company was formed in 1595 and built settlements in Indonesia as well as India. In Britain the East India Company was established in 1600 and other countries also followed suit: Denmark in 1620 and France in 1668. As well as these, the Swedish, Norwegians, and Austrians each established a trading presence on the Subcontinent. All these companies were able to exist in India simultaneously as India was then not a single country but consisted of numerous independently ruled states and kingdoms.

The British East India Company was formed by a group of wealthy merchants and landowners. They successfully sought a charter from Queen Elizabeth I to trade exclusively with countries east of the Cape of Good Hope (Africa) and West of the Straits of Magellan (South America). Their first base was established in Surat on the NW coast of India in 1608 followed a few years later by one at Masulipatnam (central east coast). Clashes between EIC ships and those of other European companies were frequent. The EIC was not as successful as the Dutch in sourcing spices as most of this type of cargo was being produced in the Indonesian islands where the Dutch successfully defended their interests.

At that time much of Northern India was under Mughal (Persian) rule. The EIC sought to gain exclusive trading rights with the Mughal held lands. They did this with the sanction of James I by means of a diplomatic mission to the then Emperor Jehanghir. It is claimed that Jehanghir preferred to deal with someone representing another ruler rather than with lower status persons such as the

merchants coming from other European countries. The mission was successful, and they were granted exclusive trading rights in exchange for supplying Jehanghir with '*….all sorts of rich goods and rarities fit for my Palace*'. This enabled the EIC to expand its operations exporting mainly manufactured and printed textiles and silks, pepper and later indigo in exchange for silver work crafted in England. By 1647 they had 23 factories (trading bases) around the Indian coast and one in China. Later, the Portuguese port of Bombay was gifted to England as part of Catherine de Braganza's dowry on her marriage to Charles II in 1662.

Elsewhere, there was competition between the British and Dutch companies to secure spices from the Islands around Indonesia that lead to several Anglo-Dutch wars. Both the French and Dutch also had interests in India that competed with the EIC. To support the Company, King Charles II granted EIC the right to command forces and fortresses to protect the Company interests; to make war and peace; to acquire territory and to exercise criminal and civil jurisdiction over the acquired areas. This was as much a practical act as anything. A reply to any request sent to England could take 12–18 months to arrive. A quicker reaction was clearly necessary if their trading factories were under attack.

A base at Calcutta (initially called Fort William) was established in 1690. Success by the EIC at the battle of Plassey in 1757 is regarded as the time when the Company changed from being merely a trading company and became a conqueror of territory. The battle, about 150 km north of Calcutta, was initiated by an attack by the Nawab of Bengal and his troops on Fort William to prevent the British from extending their fortifications. This was the site of the famous Black Hole of Calcutta massacre where many British were killed. Reinforcements were sought from their fort at Madras led by Colonel Robert Clive. Clive used his wiles to persuade an Indian army chief to defect together with his troops and Clive eventually defeated the Nawab and his French allies. After the victory Clive installed the Indian defector, Mir Jafar, as the new Nawab of Bengal. Through the Nawab, the EIC now had full control over Bengal with respect to trade and raising of revenue. It was not all straightforward, however, and there were many lesser skirmishes against local independent leaders that tried to exert their strength as the Moghul empire started to disintegrate. In addition, the EIC still had to contend with the French and over several wars managed to confine them to their capital territory of Pondicherry. Rather than enter into wars with many states controlled by Princes and Rajahs the EIC sought to establish trading agreements with them and provide them, in exchange, protection against being overrun by other neighbouring rulers.

This expansion of territory required a corresponding increase in forces. By 1803 the EIC had an army of about 260,000 troops (twice the size of the British army based at home). These were mainly native Indian soldiers commanded by about 15,000 British officers. Together with military power, the EIC now assumed leadership in administrative and judicial affairs in the areas it controlled. The country was divided administratively into three Presidencies, Bengal in the North; Bombay in the West and Madras in the east. The Zamindars, the hereditary revenue raisers of the Moghul rulers, were now used to collect a percentage of peasants' harvests to pay for the Company's activities.

Life in India was hard and short for many Europeans. The unfamiliar climate and conditions ripe for the spread of diseases meant that the mortality rate amongst recruits was high. It was often said that the life of a European in India was two monsoons.

Back in Britain an insatiable demand for tea had developed. The only source for tea at the time was from China and EIC ships were involved in the trade. To pay for the tea the Company traded opium from India to China. Later they managed to find out how to grow and process tea plants and supported the establishment of tea plantations in India where the climate and soils were suitable.

To train their new recruits the EIC established two training facilities in England. In 1806 Haileybury College was opened in Hertfordshire. Here cadets were trained to eventually become administrators in

India. Studies included Indian languages, law and politics. In 1809 they opened a military college to train Officer Cadets at Addiscombe in Surrey. Studies included more technical subjects such as mathematics and surveying as well as languages. Some Addiscombe graduates went on to be involved in the design of bridges, dams, and canals enabling the irrigation of crops thereby increasing revenue to the Company as well as leading to greater increase in exportable goods. The EIC and later private entrepreneurs leased land from the Zamindars for the production of crops in demand such as cotton and indigo. Part and parcel of the lease would be the local villages and the peasants that used to work the land. This required governance on a local level to settle disputes as well as general management of agricultural practice.

A fleet of Company owned or chartered ships known as East Indiamen transported goods from the ports of Bombay, Galle (Ceylon), Madras, Calcutta and Whampoa (Guangzhou, China) to Britain. These ships would stop to re-provision at St Helena in the South Atlantic where the Company also maintained a small presence. The threat of piracy and attack by rivalling country forces such as the French often necessitated escort of fleets of Indiamen by heavily armed Royal Navy ships. In addition the British Government had recognised that they needed at least a token military force on the subcontinent and so there was an ongoing rotation of British army forces stationed in India from the mid-eighteenth century. Many smaller, privately owned, ships known as ‘Country Ships’ were either contracted or worked as privateers to deliver goods from around the coast and neighbouring countries and islands to the main Indian ports for onward shipment.

By the mid-nineteenth century there was growing unrest amongst the native Indian troops. Some believe it was because the British Officers lost the respect of their men as they no longer led their troops from the front in engagements as they did in early days. With families from England now joining Officers, they communicated less with the troops and their language skills suffered. This made them less able to pick up on the mood of their troops.

In 1857 the troops were issued with new paper cartridges for their muskets to speed up reloading. The cartridges combined a precise amount of gunpowder with each bullet. The cartridges had been manufactured in Britain and greased to waterproof them. Before loading, the end of the cartridge had to be bitten off to expose the powder for ignition. The error had been made in making the grease from animal fat which was defiling to both Hindu and Muslim troops. Although the error was quickly realised and new cartridges were issued that used a vegetable based grease, the damage had already been done. Troops believed that the Europeans were trying to impose their own, christian, religion on them. The first troops to mutiny were in Barrackpore, refusing to use the bullets. The troops were disarmed with the help of a British Regiment stationed nearby, but the situation in other nearby cities was not so readily quelled. Over the following months Meerut, Cawnpore and Lucknow all suffered killing of both native troops and European officers and their families. The unrest spread to Delhi and the city was put under siege for several months. It took time for sufficient numbers of troops to move up from the southern Presidencies to suppress the mutineers. The rebellion only occurred within the Bengal army, and even there many native troops remained loyal to the EIC.

The following year Britain dissolved the EIC and took over Government of the Subcontinent. A new era known as the British Raj began. Queen Victoria was named Empress of India. She promised Indian subjects the same rights as other British subjects. The army was reorganised with a proportionally larger reduction in the size of the Bengal army where the mutiny occurred compared with the armies of the other Presidencies.

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw a major growth in infrastructure. Railways, irrigation canals and roadworks were constructed either by private companies or government investment. Industrialisation in Britain saw a reduction in the export of manufactured goods from India such as

textiles and a move to raw materials such as cotton. Goods such as metal implements, machinery and crockery were now being exported from Britain to India. Domiciled Europeans and those that had been born as the result of mixed race marriages, Anglo-Indians, were given preference over indigenous people for administrative and supervisory roles in the railways and many government departments.

Indian troops fought voluntarily with British troops in both world wars even though there was considerable internal unrest over being governed from London. After World War II Britain gave in to demands and granted independence to India. Four separate countries were created India, Pakistan, Ceylon and later Burma. The creation of East and West Pakistan as a secular Muslim country, driven by Ali Jinnah, the leader of the All India Muslim party resulted in mass migration to and from Pakistan. The violence resulting from this was the cause of the death of more than a million people and many more as refugees in both countries.

In the years following Indian independence from Britain, many Anglo-Indians migrated to the British Isles, Canada and Australia. Good employment prospects in England resulted in many Indian and Pakistani nationals immigrating to work in the industrial areas such as London and the midlands. Now, more than 50 years after Independence, both Muslim and Hindu families live in Northern India but there is still some unrest between them. Anglo-Indian, Portuguese and Jewish people, descendants of those that "stayed on" after Independence can be found throughout India, but they are minority groups.

Chapter 2

INDIAN RAILWAYS

The construction of railways on the Indian subcontinent lagged behind that in Britain due to the need for any developments to be approved by both the East India Company (EIC) and the British Government. Initially railways were built by companies formed in England and protected by a guarantee system. The guarantee was that land for the railways would be provided free and that a return of 5%p.a. was guaranteed to shareholders by the EIC. The companies could also pull out of the venture and be compensated by the government at any time.

The first railway company to operate a commercial service was the Great Indian Peninsular Railway Company (GIPR). In 1853 they opened a line between Bombay and Thane, a distance of 34 km. The train operated twice daily in both directions and the two steam engines, imported from England, hauled 14 carriages. This service was soon followed by the East India Railway company (EIR) opening a line between Howrah and Hoogly in Calcutta and the Madras Railway company operating a service from Madras to Arcot, a distance of 100 km. Extensions to the existing lines were soon completed, and other companies quickly came into existence and began construction. By 1860 there were eight railway companies either operating or constructing tracks. Rolling stock was imported from Britain but facilities to maintain and repair it had to be constructed. By 1869 the total track length in the country was estimated to be about 6,500 km. Freight accounted for two thirds of the revenue for the railways at this time.

The railway age came at a good time for Anglo Indians. Up to 1833 they had been largely excluded from higher administration posts in the EIC and local government posts even though a good education system had been established for their children. Anglo Indians were favoured for the more specialised tasks associated with construction and operation of the railway network because they were initially considered to have a better knowledge and aptitude for the tasks. Other new opportunities for Anglo Indians developed. A Forestry Department was formed to oversee the felling, conservation and planting of suitable timber for railway sleepers. A Telegraph Department was established and started using the railway routes for their communication lines. Senior railway staff had their own railway carriage that served as office and living quarters for when they were required to travel around the network. The carriage would be hooked up to a train and taken to the destination, unhooked and shunted onto a siding for the duration of the stay.

A major hurdle to the expansion of the railways was the need to cross the large river beds that carried the monsoon floods. Specialist bridge engineers, initially trained overseas, were employed by all the major railway companies to overcome this. By the start of the 20th century there were 23 railway companies operating about 28,000 km of tracks, in addition there was about 10,000 km of government run railways and a further 3,500 km of track owned by the rulers of princely states. At the start of the century experienced staff in railway construction and operation were sent to Africa and used on the Mombasa to Lake Victoria line in Kenya and Uganda.

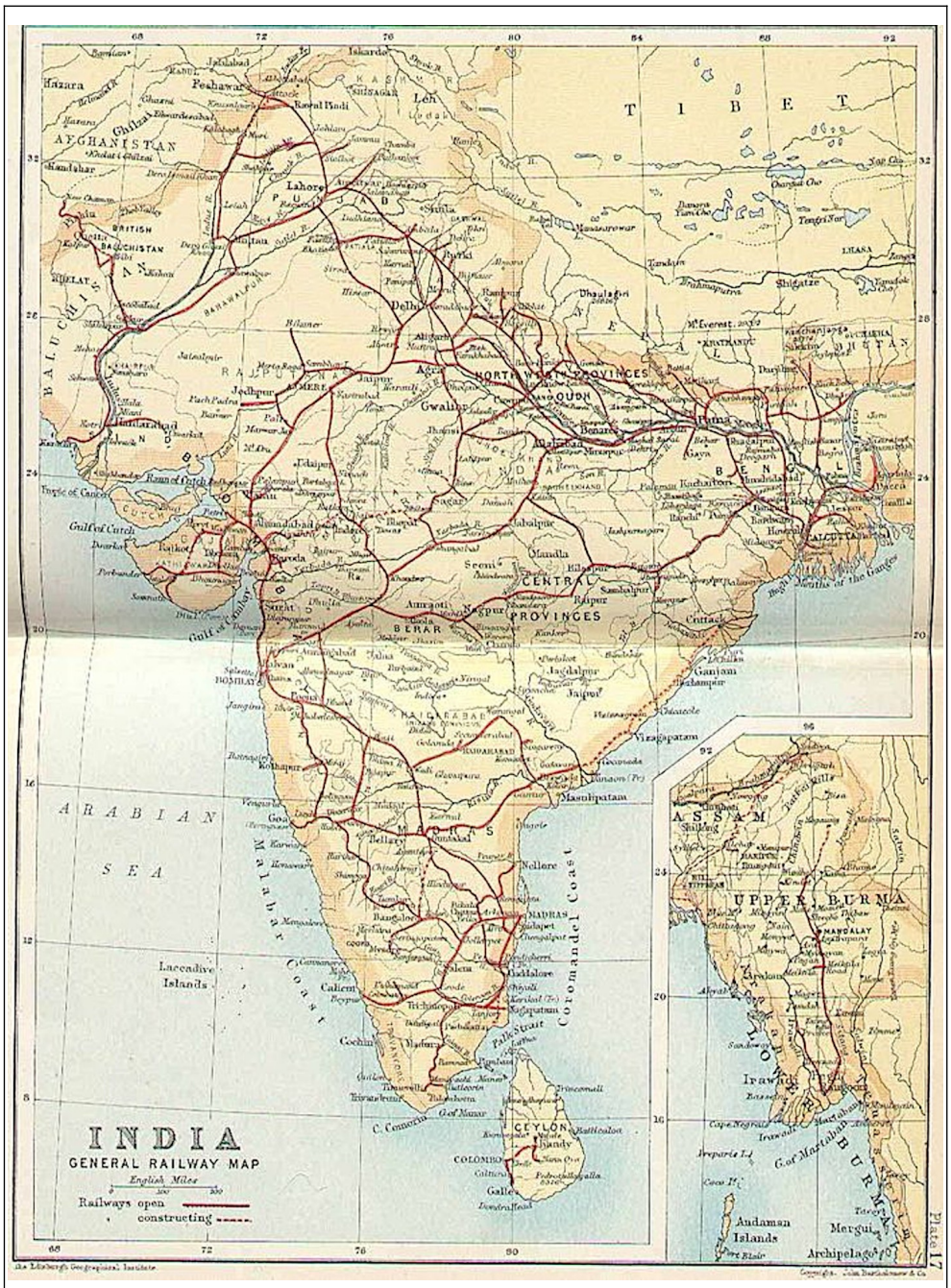
The need for steel in Europe during the world wars reduced the ability to expand the network, however, over this time the companies were taken over by the State. Some railway workshops were used for the manufacture of shells and ammunition. The network continued to expand again after WW2 and more of the rolling stock began to be built in India. Electrification of suburban lines and the

introduction of diesel locomotives to replace steam gained momentum. Independence and the creation of Pakistan meant that about 11,000 km of track became part of East and West Pakistan.

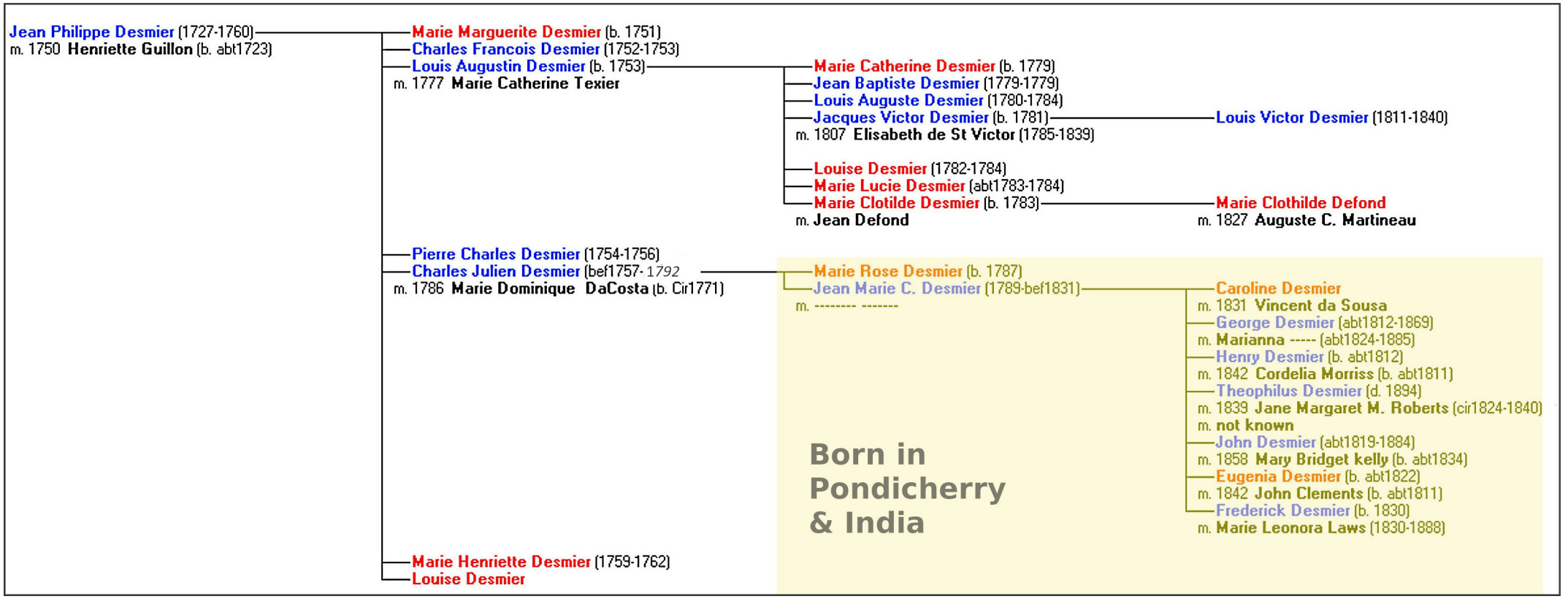
Anglo Indians were employed almost exclusively in the glamour job of engine driver. They would start off as a fireman before moving up to becoming the driver and then progress from local trains up to the intercity expresses. The train guard was usually an Anglo-Indian as well as station-masters and those involved with the safety aspects of the system such as the permanent way inspectors and foremen in the maintenance workshops.

Railway quarters were built for the use of European staff and Anglo-Indians in the larger stations and junctions. The Railway Institute was the social club for the whole family. Promotion often necessitated moving to another location on the line or to work for a different company It was common for families to travel long distances (by train) for family occasions such as weddings.

The last regular steam train in India was taken out of service in 2000. Currently, the India rail network is the fourth largest in the world with a total track length of 121,407 km and it employs 1,300,000 staff.



Map of the Railway network in India in 1893
source: Constable's Hand Atlas of India.


Jean Philippe Desmier (1727-1760)
m. 1750 Henriette Guillon (b. abt1723)
Marie Marguerite Desmier (b. 1751)
Charles Francois Desmier (1752-1753)
Louis Augustin Desmier (b. 1753)
m. 1777 Marie Catherine Texier
Marie Catherine Desmier (b. 1779)
Jean Baptiste Desmier (1779-1779)
Louis Auguste Desmier (1780-1784)
Jacques Victor Desmier (b. 1781)
Louis Victor Desmier (1811-1840)
m. 1807 Elisabeth de St Victor (1785-1839)
Louise Desmier (1782-1784)
Marie Lucie Desmier (abt1783-1784)
Marie Clotilde Desmier (b. 1783)
Marie Clothilde Defond
m. Jean Defond
m. 1827 Auguste C. Martineau
Pierre Charles Desmier (1754-1756)
Charles Julien Desmier (bef1757- 1792
m. 1786 Marie Dominique DaCosta (b. Cir1771)
Marie Rose Desmier (b. 1787)
Jean Marie C. Desmier (1789-bef1831)
m. -------- -------
Caroline Desmier
m. 1831 Vincent da Sousa
George Desmier (abt1812-1869)
m. Marianna ----- (abt1824-1885)
Henry Desmier (b. abt1812)
m. 1842 Cordelia Morriss (b. abt1811)
Theophilus Desmier (d. 1894)
m. 1839 Jane Margaret M. Roberts (cir1824-1840)
m. not known
John Desmier (abt1819-1884)
m. 1858 Mary Bridget kelly (b. abt1834)
Eugenia Desmier (b. abt1822)
m. 1842 John Clements (b. abt1811)
Frederick Desmier (b. 1830)
m. Marie Leonora Laws (1830-1888)
Born in Pondicherry & India
Marie Henriette Desmier (1759-1762)
Louise Desmier

Descendants of Jeanne Philippe Desmier & Henriette Guillon, Niort, Deux Sevres, France

Chapter 3

THE DESMIER FAMILY IN FRANCE

Ancestors of Charles Julien Desmier

Charles Julien was born in 1757 and christened at the Church of Our Lady in Niort.

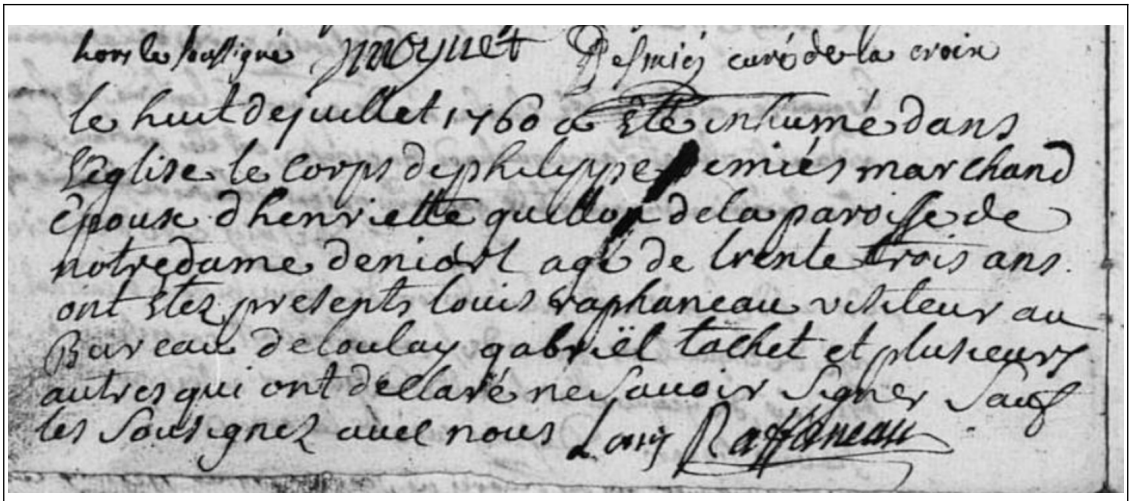
Niort is a regional centre with a population of about 60,000 (2019) approximately 250 miles south-west of Paris in the Department of Deux Sevres. Immediately to the west of the town is the tourist area known as the Marais Poitevin or Venise Verte (Green Venice). Deux Sevres means two rivers and Niort is located on the river Niortaise. As you might expect with the accent of the area on its greenness and the rivers, the area was, and still is, an agricultural region. The area has a long history of manufacturing of leather goods such as riding breeches and gloves. When the French colonised North America, trappers sent furs and skins to France and many of them were transported up river from the port of La Rochelle on the Atlantic for processing in the Niort region.

Map of France showing the location of Niort
Adapted from
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/88/France_cities.png/768px-France_cities.png

Charles Julien was the fifth of seven children. His father, Jean Philippe Desmier was a Perruquier, a person who made wigs, which in those days were very fashionable with the upper classes. The professions of barber, wigmaker and bather were in those days quite respected professions. Jean was a Master Perruquier and a member of the professional guild which set the standards of the profession and restricted the number of people who could practice the profession in the town. Membership of the Guild could be passed on to other family members. This appears to be how Jean obtained his position as his father René (1688-1743) was also a Master Perruquier (stated on the marriage transcript for his first son Jacques René). It is probably not too surprising to learn that the brother of Jean's mother, Jacques Taschet, was also a member of the guild.

Jean Philippe and Henriette Guillon were married in Coulonges sur L'Autize, a town about 20 km North-west of Niort in 1750. This was Henriette's second marriage. Her first was to Jean Borot, a shopkeeper in 1743. He died 19 months later but transcriptions of baptism and death records suggest that three chidren had been born of the marriage and at least two died in early childhood.

Her marriage to Jean Philippe lasted for ten years. Jean died in 1760 and is interred in La Croix Comtesse which is a town about 30 km south of Niort. His burial record shows him as a shopkeeper of Niort and that he died whilst visiting the village Loulay which is 5km south of La Croix-Comtesse.



Jean Philippe Desmier internment in La Croix-Comtesse, Charente Maritime, France
source: http://www.archinoe.net/v2/ad17/visualiseur/registre.html?id=170043241

Henriette married again in 1762, when Charles Julien was five years old. His stepfather Jean Baptiste Edme Machard, was an assistant Perruquier. Henriette was 37 years old and Jean Baptiste was only 23 at the time of their marriage. Henriette had given birth to seven children during her time with Jean Philippe Desmier that we know of. Six of these were still alive at the time of her second marriage and are listed as witnesses. (There is some confusion here. As well as being listed as a witness, I also have a record of the death of a Charles

Bion notary at Niort AD79 liasse 3E 6955
2nd May 1762 Contract of marriage Machard / Guillon (summary)
Jean Baptiste Edme Machard assistant wigmaker living in this parish of Notre Dame eldest son of Mr **Jean Baptist Edme Machard** surgeon and **Marie Magdeleine Braux** proceed with consent and special procuration of 20th February 1762 (Potiers,royal notary at Bielle of the provost of Nogent the king ....)
Henriette Guillon, widow and .... of Sr **Jean Philippe Desmier,** master wigmaker living in this parish guardian of minor children

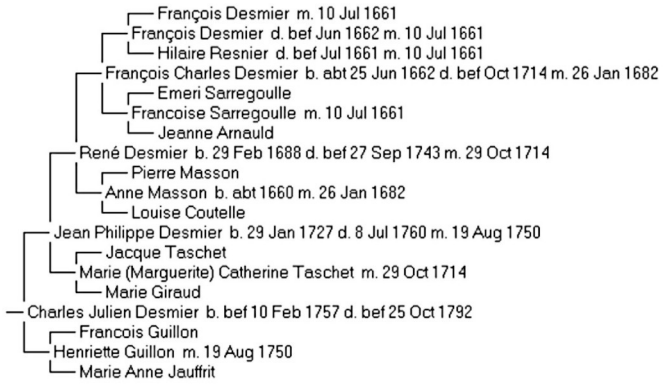
Present for the aforesaid six children / **Charles Louis Francois / Louis / Charles Julien / Marguerite / Louise / Marie Henriette** marie Taschet cousin and parent of 2nd or 3rd degree of children, Louis Saujon, grand uncle of children on behalf of Reneé Taschet his wife, Sr Francois Raffaneau to the same degree, Antoine Denis Pechereau and Augustin Francois Barroy friend of the parties.

NB: Louis René Bion was notary of the Chatellenie of Saint Maxire 1750 to 1788 he was made royal notary at Niort, then public notary, both at Niort 1757 to 1806

Marriage Henriette Guillon and Jean B E Marchard
My translation of the Notary Contract

Francois at the age of 18 months in 1753, perhaps there was another son born who was given the same names).

The father of Charles' step-father was a Surgeon Major of the marines (details on the marriage transcript between his son and Henriette). Perhaps this is the family connection that led to Charles serving his apprenticeship as a surgeon and travelling to Pondicherry? In those days Barbers and Surgeons were closely related or common professions.


François Desmier m. 10 Jul 1661
François Desmier d. bef Jun 1662 m. 10 Jul 1661
Hilaire Resnier d. bef Jul 1661 m. 10 Jul 1661
François Charles Desmier b. abt 25 Jun 1662 d. bef Oct 1714 m. 26 Jan 1682
Emeri Sarregoulle
Francoise Sarregoulle m. 10 Jul 1661
Jeanne Arnauld
René Desmier b. 29 Feb 1688 d. bef 27 Sep 1743 m. 29 Oct 1714
Pierre Masson
Anne Masson b. abt 1660 m. 26 Jan 1682
Louise Coutelle
Jean Philippe Desmier b. 29 Jan 1727 d. 8 Jul 1760 m. 19 Aug 1750
Jacque Taschet
Marie (Marguerite) Catherine Taschet m. 29 Oct 1714
Marie Giraud
Charles Julien Desmier b. bef 10 Feb 1757 d. bef 25 Oct 1792
Francois Guillon
Henriette Guillon m. 19 Aug 1750
Marie Anne Jauffrit

Ancestors of Charles Julien Desmier

Looking back at earlier generations of the family. The father of René was François Charles Desmier who was baptised in 1662 and was a Master Panisier which, I believe, was a type of baker. François signed his name as Frans on his marriage record and his wife Anne could also sign her name. The ancestors for the previous two generations were both also named François which probably takes us back to about 1620, however I do not have much in the way of details about these people other than to say that they were married in the Parish of St André in the town of Niort.

Connections with nobility

In the villages near Niort there are many small châteaux open to the public. One at Olbreuse about 20 km south of Niort was owned by Alexander Desmier. His daughter Eléonore Desmier married a German prince and their daughter, Sophie Dorothée, married George William of Brunswick who later became George I of England. She is referred to in France as the Grandmother of Europe because the English Royal family and many of the Emperors of Germany and Russia and the Duke of Orleans are descended from her.

The château at Olbreuse used to be a small private museum, but now it is just a private residence. This is the royal connection that is referred to in the 'Family Name History' printouts that are available for the Desmier surname from the pop-up heraldry and genealogy stalls that occasionally set up in shopping centres.

The story of Sophie makes very interesting reading. Their marriage was dissolved before George became King of England, but they had two children, one eventually to become George II. The other, Sophie, became Queen of Prussia and mother of Frederick the Great. When George went over to England to take the throne his mother, Sophie, was sent into exile at Ahlden Castle in Germany and forbidden ever to see her children again. The book 'Sophie Dorothea' by Ruth Jordan (1971) describes her story and is readily available through libraries. There is also an old film about the story *Saraband for Dead Lovers* (Ealing, 1948) that is still available as a DVD/Blue Ray online.

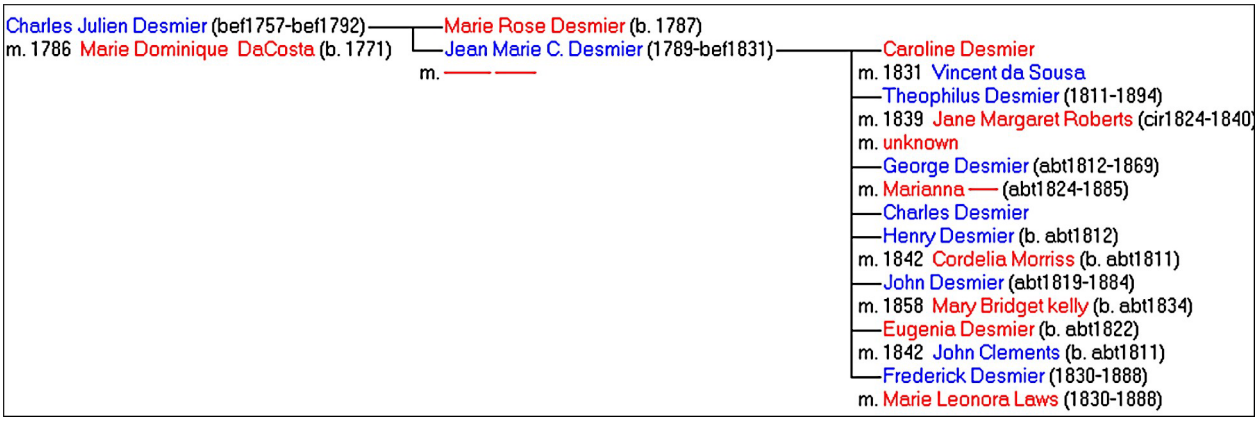
Is there a connection with our family? There does not seem to be a direct connection in the last 300 years or so. Although a rare name in the English-speaking world, 'Desmier' is a bit more common in west and south-western France. There were a total of 434 'Desmier' births in France between 1890 and 1990 with a concentration in the mid-western Departments and in particular Deux-Sevres (Geopatronyme, 2019).

We may not be able to prove that we are descended from royal bloodlines, but we can certainly claim that a lot of European royal families are descended from Desmier bloodstock.

Niort, Deux Sevres, France (2008)
source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Panorama_Niort.jpg

Chapter 4

CHARLES JULIEN DESMIER & MARIE DACOSTA IN PONDICHERRY


Charles Julien Desmier (bef1757-bef1792)
m. 1786 Marie Dominique DaCosta (b. 1771)
Marie Rose Desmier (b. 1787)
Jean Marie C. Desmier (1789-bef1831)
m. ——
Caroline Desmier
m. 1831 Vincent da Sousa
Theophilus Desmier (1811-1894)
m. 1839 Jane Margaret Roberts (cir1824-1840)
m. unknown
George Desmier (abt1812-1869)
m. Marianna —— (abt1824-1885)
Charles Desmier
Henry Desmier (b. abt1812)
m. 1842 Cordelia Morriss (b. abt1811)
John Desmier (abt1819-1884)
m. 1858 Mary Bridget kelly (b. abt1834)
Eugenia Desmier (b. abt1822)
m. 1842 John Clements (b. abt1811)
Frederick Desmier (1830-1888)
m. Marie Leonora Laws (1830-1888)

Charles Julien Desmier

Charles Julien Desmier was the first 'Desmier' on the Indian sub-continent

I don't know when Charles Julien Desmier left Niort for Pondicherry, or even if he went directly to Pondicherry. What is known is that on 21st February 1786 at the age of 28 he married Marie Dominique DaCosta aged 15 at the Church of Our Lady of the Angels in Pondicherry. At the time of his marriage Charles was an assistant surgeon at the King's Hospital in Pondicherry. The marriage record also informed us that he was born in Niort, then in the Province of Poitou (now Department of Deux Sevres) and was the son of Jean Philippe Desmier and Henriette Guillon.

Charles and Marie had two children, a daughter Marie Rose (born 1787) and a son Jean Marie Charles who was born in 1789. The only information for their daughter Marie Rose is her registration of baptism in the Notre Dames des Anges church. At the time Charles Julien was still an Assistant Surgeon at the Royal and Military Hospital. When Jean Marie Charles was baptised in the same church two years later his father was described as Surgeon at the Royal Hospital. Presumably he had been promoted.

In 1790 the hospital in Pondicherry was forced to make some changes and four health officers were named as persons whose jobs were to be eliminated, amongst them was the name Desmier. French surgery was held in high regard in the 18th century and was considered to be the most progressive in the field of the European nations. No doubt if he had wanted to move into the rest of India he would have been welcomed. Unfortunately the only other information I have found about his activities is in the following paragraphs.

Records of the Superior Council of Pondicherry (Pondicherry, 1790, 1792) show that also in 1790 Charles Julien was sentenced to pay his father-in-law the sum of 860 rupees "…. *contained in an obligation with 4% interest* …." The details of why he had to pay this money are not stated. Perhaps his father had to help him out with his debts after he was dismissed from the hospital?

It seems that Charles Julien had died before October 1792, although I have been unable to find a record of death or burial in available online records. In that month the Superior Council elected Jean

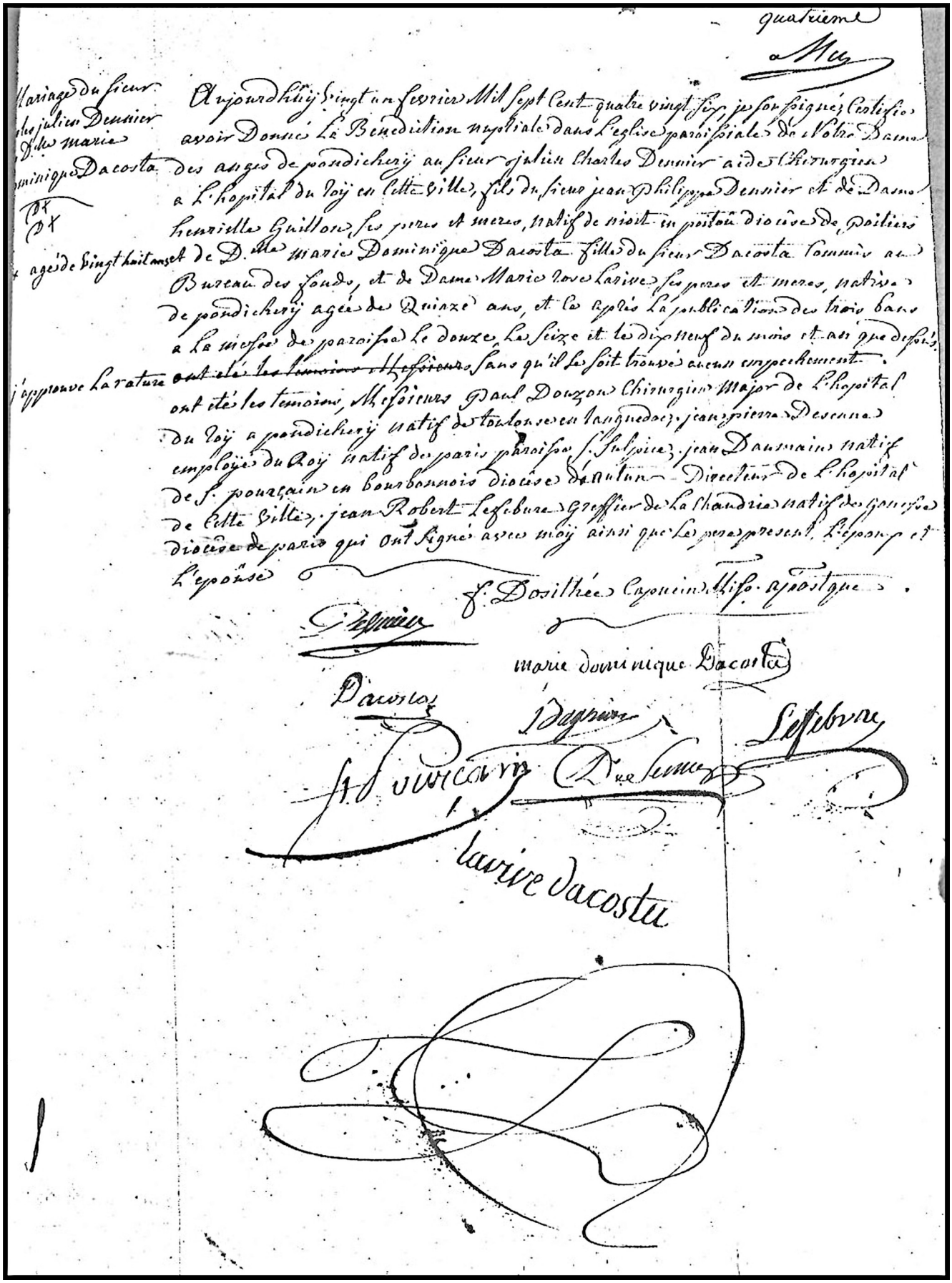
Pierre de Senne, an uncle by marriage, to be "*…. curator to the causes of the widow Desmiers…*" and Nicholas daCosta to be the "*...guardian of the so called minors…*" A Pierre Maurice Wilsteck was appointed subrogated guardian of the minors. As Marie was only 19 and still a minor that is why the court appointed someone to be looking after her interests and her father was appointed guardian of Jean and Marie.

Marie is mentioned in a list of inhabitants of Pondicherry in 1796 as a widow living alone with no servants in the Rue de Capuchins. Jean Marie Charles would have only been about seven years old when this list was compiled so it raises the question about where he and his sister were or where they were educated (perhaps children were not recorded?). Marie would have been in her mid-twenties so it is very likely that she later married a second time.

My translation of the marriage record of Charles Julien Desmier and Marie Dominique DaCosta (copy of the original document on opposite page)

Today 21st February 1785 I certify to have given the nuptial Benediction in the parochial church of Notre Dame des Anges Pondicherry to Sr Julien Charles Desmier, Assistant Surgeon at the Hospital of the King in this town, son of Sr Jean Philippe Desmier and of Damoiselle Henriette Guillon, the father and mother native of Niort, Poitou Diocese of Poitiers aged 28 years and of Damoiselle Marie Dominique Dacosta daughter of Sr Dacosta company clerk, Office of Funds and of Dame Marie Rose Larive, the father and mother natives of Pondicherry age of 15 years and after the publication of three banns ????? on the 12th, the 16th and the 19th of the month and it has been found without any impeachment. The witnesses were Mr Paul Donzon surgeon major of the Hospital of the King at Pondicherry native of Toulouse in Languedoc, Jean Pierre Desonne employed in the Kings Hospital native of Paris St Sulphice parish, Jean Daumain,native of St Pourcain in Bourlonnais diocese of Autun, director of the Hospital of this town, Jean Robert Lefebre clerk of the court of registry native of Gennesses diocese of Paris who have signed with me and the husband and wife.

Signed
CJD - (Charles Julien Desmier); Marie Dominique Dacosta; Lefebvre; Dacosta; Larive Dacosta; Desonne and others



Marriage of Sr Charles Julien Desmier and Marie Dominique Dacosta
source:FamilySearch microfilm

Church of Notre Dames Des Anges Pondicherry
By Aravindaraja - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21680013

Pondicherry

Pondicherry was originally established as a trading colony by the French in 1683. The original village was tended so well by the French that the Indians called it Phulcherry meaning flower town. The word was corrupted by the French to Pondichéry and by the English to Pondicherry. Over the next hundred years it was to go through a very unsettled time being captured by the Dutch in 1693, returned to French rule in 1697, captured again, this time by the British, in 1761, returned back to French rule in 1765 and then recaptured once more by the British in 1778.

In 1785 Pondicherry was again restored to the French. It may well be that Charles was sent out as part of a re-colonising force soon after the French regained possession of the colony and that he got married to Marie quite soon after his arrival. From 1785 to 1790 there were no less than six Governors appointed to Pondicherry, hardly indicative of administrative efficiency. Back in France about 1790 the French revolution was beginning. News of the revolution received a mixed reception in Pondicherry. Residents blamed their hardships on the administration in France but at the same time they were concerned for their future. A revolution of sorts occurred in Pondicherry that resulted in the forming of a General Assembly under the leadership of the Administrator of the new Compagnie des Indes to present their grievances to the National Assembly in Paris. Their main grievances were freedom of commerce and a desire for increased military and political power at the regional level. The revolution in Pondicherry did not share the same level of lawlessness and anarchy as back in France. They did not carry the revolutionary principles of equality and fraternity to the extent of admitting Indian inhabitants in to the General Assembly. The revolution was confined to French citizens.

In 1793 war broke out yet again between France and England. In August the British attacked Pondicherry and it wasn't long before the town was surrendered over to the British to prevent inevitable further destruction as the French were hopelessly outnumbered. The personal liberty of the citizens and property rights was assured as part of the terms of surrender. In an English census in 1793 there was a headcount of 823 Europeans in the town including women and children.

The French possessions in India were restored to them in 1816 as a result of a Paris peace treaty. Pondicherry was to remain in French possession until 1954 when, along with the other French possessions of Karikal Mahé and Yanam (Yanaon), it came under the administration of the Indian Government.

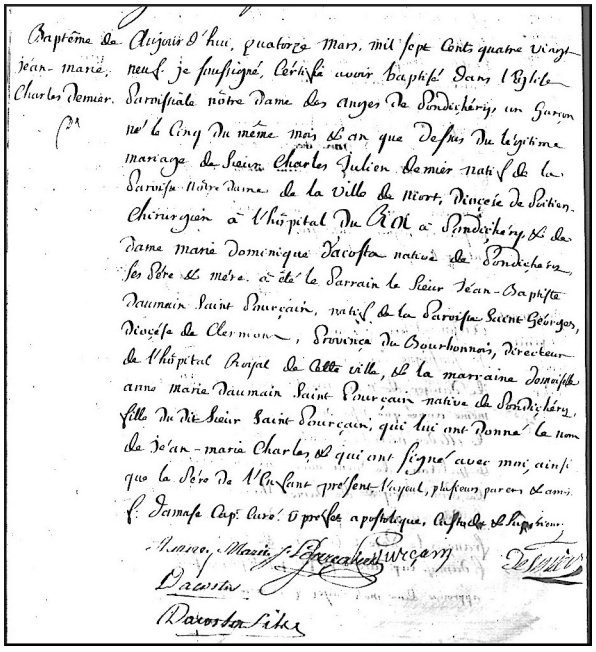
Location map showing Pondicherry (Puducherry) and other French Possessions in Colonial India
source:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lagekarte_Unionsterritorium_Puducherry.png

Chapter 5

JEAN MARIE CHARLES DESMIER

Jean Marie Charles Desmier (1789-bef1831)
m. —— ——
- Caroline Desmier
  - m. 1831 Vincent da Sousa
- Theophilus Desmier (1811-1894)
  - m. 1839 Jane Margaret M. Roberts (cir1824-1840)
  - m. unknown
- George Desmier (abt1812-1869)
  - m. Marianna —— (abt1824-1885)
- Charles Desmier
- Henry Desmier (b. abt1812)
  - m. 1842 Cordelia Morriss (b. abt1811)
- John Desmier (abt1819-1884)
  - m. 1858 Mary Bridget kelly (b. abt1834)
- Eugenia Desmier (b. abt1822)
  - m. 1842 John Clements (b. abt1811)
- Frederick Desmier (1830-1888)
  - m. Marie Leonora Laws (1830-1888)

Jean Marie Charles Desmier was the 2nd child of Charles Julien Desmier & Marie



Baptism of Jean Marie Charles Demier
Today fourteenth of March 1789 I the undersigned certify to have baptised in the parochial church Notre Dames des Anges, Pondicherry a boy born the 5th of the same month who is of the legitimate marriage of Mr Charles Julien Demier, native of the parish of Notre Dame of the town of Niort diocese of Poitier, Surgeon of the hospital of the King at Pondicherry and of Dame Marie Dominique da'costa native of Pondicherry. The father and the mother and the Godfather Mr Jean-Baptiste Daumain of Saint Pourcain native of the parish of Saint Georges, diocese of Clermon Province of Bourbonais, director of the Royal hospital of this town and the Godmother Madame Anne Maria Daumain Saint Pourcain native of Pondicherry, daughter of the said Mr Saint-Pourcain who has given the name of Jean Marie Charles and who has signed with me also who the father of the child ?????????? always
??
J Desmier
Anne Marie Pourcain Pourcain
Dacosta
Dacosta ?????

Baptism of Jean Marie Charles Desmier Pondicherry 1789
(with my translation) source: Family Search microfilm

It seems as though Jean Marie Charles anglicised his name to John Charles. There is a note concerning him found by an internet search as follows:

*John Desmier was a Native of Pondicherry. But he quitted his country in his infancy and received his education in the seafaring line at the academy at Vepery in Madras. He considers himself to be a British subject and requests the Magistrate to get the permission of the Government for navigation of vessels under British colours. (*Source:Records of the Madura District 1790-1835, vol 8 p81*)*

Vepery is now a suburb of Madras and there is currently a maritime academy in the area. The above quotation could indicate that his mother remarried and moved into British India after 1796 when she had been recorded as a widow living in Pondicherry.

There are other references to John as a seafaring man. In the marriage of his eldest daughter Caroline (Asiatic Journal, 1831) he is referred to as .....*late Capt. John Charles Desmier of the Country Service*. The Country Service was the fleet of privately owned ships that worked between the various ports of the subcontinent and also other Asian countries. This ties in with my dad telling me that his father told him a story about one of his ancestors playing on his fathers ship when he was young.

Country ships were usually less than 200 tons displacement. As far as I can determine a ship of 100 tons displacement would be about 20 m. stem to stern and have a maximum beam of about 6 m. A crew of about 20 would be required to handle the sails and cargo. the crew would sleep on the deck and there would be a cabin in the stern for the captain. The cargo carried could be anything that needed transporting from regional areas to the main ports where it would be loaded on the EIC ships for onward shipping to England. Goods brought over from England would also be carried back to the regional settlements.

I have managed to find some records of John Charles' voyages. These are only over a short period but as he was Captain of four ships in less than four years it is likely that he was not the owner but was employed by local merchants to command their ships. Both brigs (brigantines) and schooners are two masted ships but with different sail shapes and rigging. In the announcement for the voyage of *The Providence* there were two passengers named as arriving in Colombo on the ship implying that there were reasonable facilities to take paying passengers.

As he was born in March 1789, John would have been just 22 years old when he was captain of the Surat Castle in 1811.

Voyages for captain J Desmier				
When		Ship	Voyage	Reference
1811	Apr 21	Surat castle (brig)	arr. Bombay fr. Colombo	Bombay Courier
1812	May 31	Providence (brig)	arr. Colombo fr. Cochin	Ceylon Gov't. Gazette
1812	Sep 5	Caroline (brig)	dep. Madras to Colombo	Gov't. Gazette, India
1813	Oct 31	Margareta (brig)	arr. Colombo, Ceylon	Ceylon Gov't. Gazette
1814	Dec 30	Virgeny (schooner)	arr, Bombay fr. Cochin	Bombay Courier
1822	Feb 22	Eliza (brig)	dep. Bombay to Surat	Bombay Gazette
1824	Oct 9	Six Sisters (brig)	to sea	Bombay Gazette
1828	Sep 7	Regia (brig)	dep. Port Louis (Mauritius) to Colombo	Oriental Observer (Calcutta)

Some of the voyages by Captain John Desmier
Collated from Adam Matthew Digital 18th century Journals (accessed through National Library of Australia eresources, June, 2019 and Madras Courier (using FindMyPast))

I have a DNA match with this family through Michelle Rebello and Frederick Desmier (see chapter 23).

Photo of a replica 16th century Dutch East India Company ship of approximately 60 tons.

Source: Creative commons accessed online at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duyfken.
The replica ship is based in Perth, Western Australia

Children of John Charles Desmier

Also known as Jean Marie Charles Desmier

In this section I have only presented information on his children. Where significantly more information has been discovered about their descendants I have presented this in separate chapters.

Family information that was passed to Douglas Kenneth Desmier from his uncle, Francis Charles Desmier, before his emigration to Australia in 1950 was that they were descended from Frederick Desmier, a son of Jean Marie Charles born in 1789. I have a copy of another letter to an aunt of mine from Francis Desmier's wife that Frederick Desmier was known to have brothers that went to north India. I have assumed that Henry, John and Eugenia are the children of John Charles based on the fact that the dates are compatible and each of them have a John Desmier named as their father on their marriage record. I have added my ancestor, George Desmier, as being part of this family as the dates are compatible and I have the family story about a ship's captain as an ancestor. Theophilus Desmier has been included in the family group because his likely age makes him compatible and he was a merchant based in Cochin about 200 km south of Calicut. I have not found any details regarding John Charles's wife or wives.

Caroline Desmier

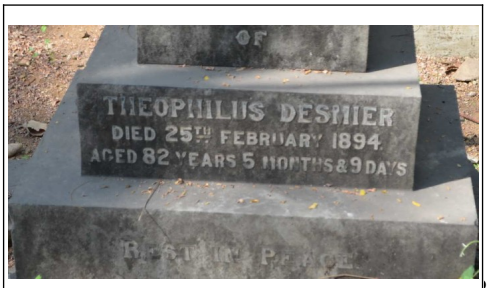
Daughter of John Charles Desmier

The marriage of his eldest daughter, Caroline, was announced in the Asiatic Journal (1831) to Mr Vincent de Sousa. They were married in Calicut. Calicut was an important port for the export of spices for many centuries. it was also a centre for weaving cotton cloth (calico).

Theophilus Desmier

Son of John Charles Desmier (assumed)

Theophilus married Jane Maria Roberts in 1839 in Cochin. No ages or the names of fathers were recorded and the entry was written across the page with disregard for the printed column headings. Theo's occupation was recorded as a Merchant of Calicut (probably a milner q.v.). Jane was from

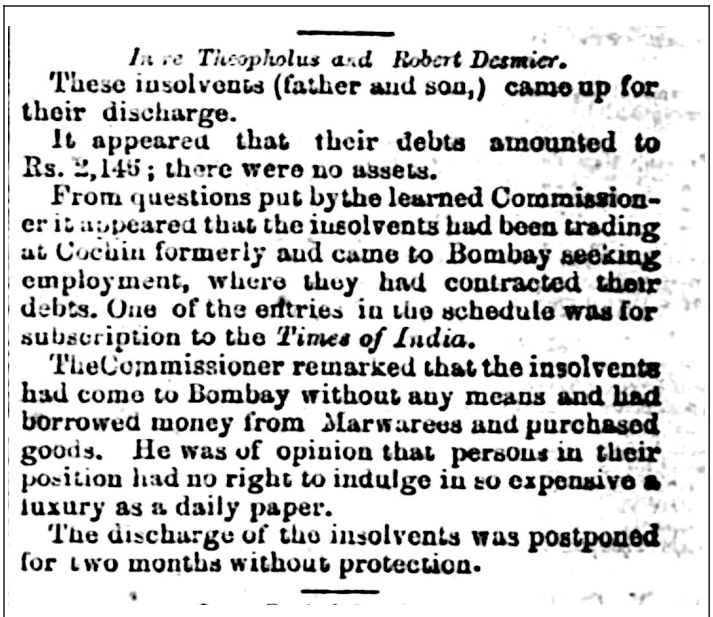


Grave of Theophilus Desmier
Sewri cemetery, Bombay
(Source: FIBIS/L. Churack)

Cochin. Jane died in Calicut 16 months after their marriage. She was described as ‘ *.... the wife of T. Desmier, age 16, only daughter of the late Capt. Roberts of the Country Service.’* (Asiatic Journal, 1840).

Theo next shows up in the records as a Lieutenant in the 3rd regiment of the Guicowar’s troops in Baroda. This was the family name of the Maharaja of Baroda. His son, Robert, was also there as a Junior Lieutenant (Bombay Almanack 1864).

Theophilus had a second partner (name unknown) and eventually relocated to Bombay where at least 5 more children were born. He was mentioned in the debtors court several times in 1867. The final outcome of the case has not been found but another article in the paper seemed to indicate that he had at some time been employed as a bailiff in the small causes court (Times of India 28/2/1882).



In re Theopholus and Robert Desmier.

These insolvents (father and son,) came up for their discharge.

It appeared that their debts amounted to Rs. 2,145; there were no assets.

From questions put by the learned Commissioner it appeared that the insolvents had been trading at Cochin formerly and came to Bombay seeking employment, where they had contracted their debts. One of the entries in the schedule was for subscription to the *Times of India*.

The Commissioner remarked that the insolvents had come to Bombay without any means and had borrowed money from Marwarees and purchased goods. He was of opinion that persons in their position had no right to indulge in so expensive a luxury as a daily paper.

The discharge of the insolvents was postponed for two months without protection.

Theophilus and Robert Desmier- Insolvency Petition
Bombay Gazette 16 April 1867

Some information on the families descended from Theophilus Desmier and his wives follow in chapter 6.

George Desmier

Son of John Charles Desmier (assumed)

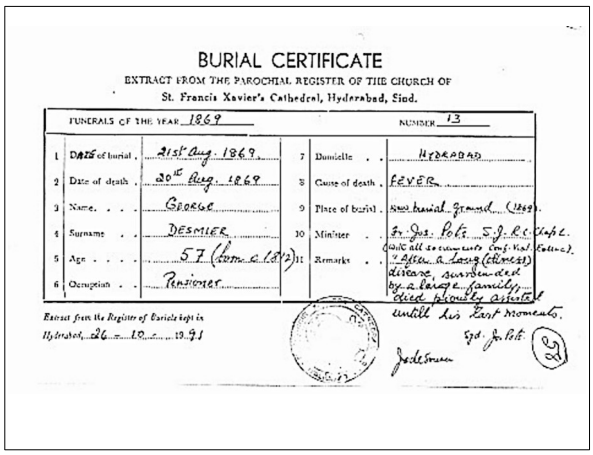
If George's age on his death extract is correct he would have been born about 1812.

George and Marianna had at least 13 children between 1840 and 1861. Adolina, Willermina, Joseph and possibly others died in childhood. It seems that records regarding baptisms were not forwarded by the Catholic St Xavier Cathedral in Hyderabad to London. Robert Gibbs (a descendant of George Charles Desmier, see appendix 1) wrote to the church and sought extracts from the records still held by the church. This is the source of baptism dates of George's children as well as his and Marianna's death extracts.

In the 1853 edition of the *Bombay Calendar and Almanac*, George's occupation is recorded as a clerk in the Executive Engineers office at Karachi. It is not known when he moved up to Hyderabad or when or where he married Marianna but all of the children were born in Hyderabad. It is possible that George and Marianna were married in Hyderabad but it is unlikely to be in the Cathedral where the records have been searched on behalf of Robert Gibbs.

Marianna, sometimes recorded as Marian, outlived George by 15 years. Marianna was thought to have had a Dutch surname by a granddaughter of George Charles Desmier. It is likely that she had an Indian ancestor as on her daughter Isabella's baptism extract the words `’mixed marriage were entered in the column 'Dispensation from Impediment'.

The descendants of George and Marianna are described chapter 5.



BURIAL CERTIFICATE

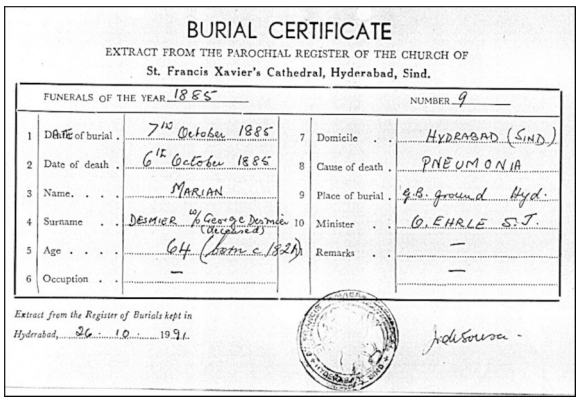
EXTRACT FROM THE PAROCHIAL REGISTER OF THE CHURCH OF St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Hyderabad, Sind.

FUNERALS OF THE YEAR 1869 NUMBER 13

1	Date of burial	21st Aug. 1869	7	Domicile	Hyderabad
2	Date of death	20th Aug. 1869	8	Cause of death	Fever
3	Name	George	9	Place of burial	New burial Ground (1869)
4	Surname	Desmier	10	Minister	Fr. Jos. Pots S.J. R.C. Chpl.
5	Age	57 (born c 1812)	11	Remarks	Could all encounters Cons. Hosp. Bounce). Often a lasting (Chronic) disease contracted by a large family, died plenty assisted until his Last Moments.
6	Occupation	Pensioner			

Extract from the Register of Burials kept in Hyderabad, 26 - 10 - 1971

Fr. Jos. Pots



BURIAL CERTIFICATE

EXTRACT FROM THE PAROCHIAL REGISTER OF THE CHURCH OF St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Hyderabad, Sind.

FUNERALS OF THE YEAR 1885 NUMBER 9

1	Date of burial	7th October 1885	7	Domicile	Hydrabad (Sind)
2	Date of death	6th October 1885	8	Cause of death	Pneumonia
3	Name	Marian	9	Place of burial	G.B. Ground Hyd.
4	Surname	Desmier w/o George Desmier (Deceased)	10	Minister	O. Ehrle S.J.
5	Age	64 (born c 1821)		Remarks	—
6	Occupation	—			—

Extract from the Register of Burials kept in Hyderabad, 26 - 10 - 1971

Burial Certificates of George and Marianna Desmier sourced directly from the Cathedral in Hyderabad, Sind by descendant George Gibbs

Charles Desmier

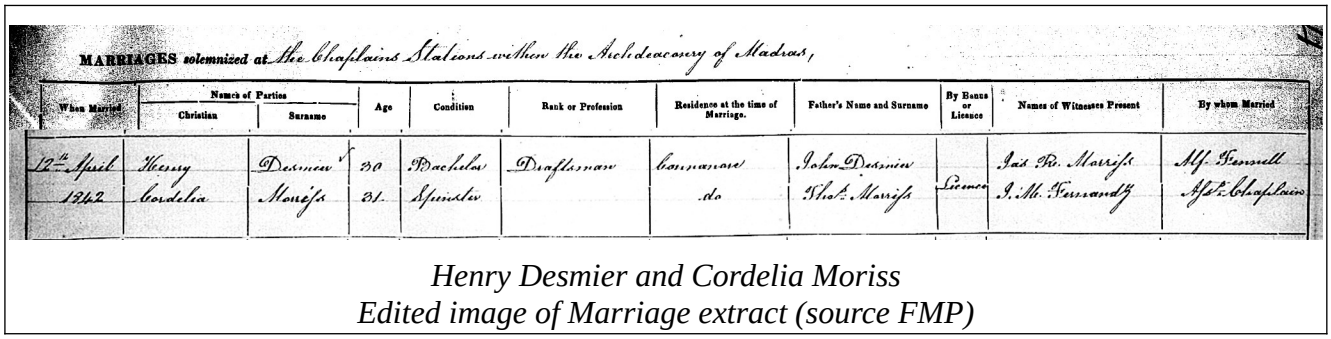
Presumed son of John Charles Desmier

The only mention found of Charles is in listings in editions of the *Bombay Almanack* from 1861 to 1868. In 1861 he was recorded as a clerk in the office of the Indus flotilla in Kotri, Sindh. In 1864 he was a clerk to the deputy collector in Sehwan, Sindh and in 1868 he was a clerk in the settlement office in Sukkur, Sindh.

Henry Desmier

Son of John Charles Desmier

Henry would also have been born about 1812 according to his marriage extract. He married Cordelia Moriss at the chaplains Station at Cannanore (now Kannur). Cannanore is about 70 km north of Calicut. Henry was a draughtsman and 30 years old, one year younger than Cordelia.



MARRIAGES solemnized at the Chaplains Stations within the Archdeaconry of Madras,

When Married	Names of Parties: Christian	Names of Parties: Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname	By Banns or Licence	Names of Witnesses Present	By whom Married
12th April 1862	Henry	Desmier	30	Bachelor	Draftsman	Cannanore	John Desmier	Licence	Jas Pr. Morris	Mf. Fennell
	Cordelia	Morisa	21	Spinster		do	Robt. Morris		J. M. Fernandez	Asst. Chaplain

Henry Desmier and Cordelia Moriss
Edited image of Marriage extract (source FMP)

I have been unable to find anything more about Henry or any descendants.

John Desmier

Son of John Charles Desmier

John Desmier (abt1819-1884)
m. 1858 Mary Bridget kelly (b. abt1834)
Anne Agniss Desmier (b. 1860)
Willie Alexander Desmier (b. 1865)
Constance Ada Desmier (b. 1869)

John married Mary Bridget Kelly in 1859 in Shimoga (about 300 km north-west of Bangalore and 400 km north of Calicut) when he was 39 years old. This implies that he was born about 1819. His occupation was given as a first class sub-overseer (a local government role?). Mary was 24 years old. John & Mary had three children that I know of.

When their first child Anne Agnes Desmier was born in 1860 and baptised 6 months later in Bangalore John's occupation is recorded as a coffee overseer.

Willie Alexander George Desmier was baptised in 1865 one month after his birth. He too was baptised in Bangalore but the family was recorded as still living in Shimoga. By this time John was working as a clerk at the district superintendents office.

When Constance Ada Desmier was baptised in 1869 they were living in Bangalore and John was described as a pensioned Surveyor. He would have been about 50 years old. A burial extract shows John died of fever in 1884 in Bangalore. His occupation was recorded as 'pensioner' and his age recorded as 75 (suggesting a birth year of 1809). I suspect that the age recorded on his marriage to Mary is more reliable and so I have used that implied birth year in my records.

Eugenia Desmier

Daughter of John Charles Desmier

Eugenia married John Clements, an Assistant Apothecary in Colabah, Bombay in 1842. Her age was recorded as 20 years old indicating that she was born about 1822. John was 11 years older than Eugenia. No further information has been found.

Frederick Desmier

Son of John Charles Desmier

Frederick's grandson, Francis Charles Desmier, had kept a personal record that Frederick Desmier was born in 1830 and a son of Jean Charles Desmier. The only records I have been able to find about a Frederick Desmier in this timeframe is an insolvency notice in the *London Gazette* (6/4/1848) stating that he was formerly employed as a clerk in a milners in Bombay and a listing in the *Bombay Calendar & Almanac* (1853) as a clerk in Kalbadavie, Bombay. Francis also recorded that Frederick married Mary Lenora Laws from Bombay who was born in 1830 and died in 1888.

Mary is buried in the Roman Catholic cemetery, Trichinopoly. On her grave is written:

Beloved wife of Frederick Desmier and daughter of Thomas and Johanna Laws of Bombay

The descendants of Frederick and Mary are described in chapter 16 & following.

Calicut

Calicut is about 1000 km south of Bombay on the Malabar Coast. Vasco de Gama first visited the area in 1498 and began trade between India and Portugal via a sea route. Prior to this time there was dealings with Arab traders for many years. The name Calicut is an anglicised version of its' old and now reintroduced name of Kozhikode. The cotton material Calico gets its' name from a further corruption of Calicut. Following the Portuguese, the English, French and Dutch all established trading posts in the area. the chief exports in the 19th century were teak timber, cotton cloth, spices and coconuts. today the city has a population of about 600,000.

Cochin

Cochin (now Kochi) is about 200 km south of Calicut and still is a major trading port. It was a major port for the export of spices for many centuries and there is still a population (but dwindling) of Jewish people descended from early merchants. The first European trading post was established there by the Portuguese in 1500. The city is located at the head of a river system that connects with a complex system of backwaters that is used to transport spices and nuts down to the port. Cochin was the first of the princely states to willingly join the Indian Union following independence from colonial rule.

Cannanore

Cannanore (now Kannur) is 90 km north of Calicut and was another trading port established many centuries ago connecting with Persia and Arabia. At one time it was a military base for british troops. The town is now smaller than Cochin and Calicut.

Kotri

Kotri is on the opposite bank of the Indus from Hyderabad. It was the town uses as the base for the Indus Flotilla, the name of a company which was established in 1859 and used steamers and barges to run cargo through the Rivers of present day Pakistan. In the absence of decent roads and a railway, the rivers of Pakistan provided a means of transportation all the way from Arabian Sea to Northern Punjab city of Makhad.

Sehwan

A historic city situated on the west bank of the Indus River 130 km. north-west of Hyderabad.

Sukkur

Modern Sukkur, or New Sukkur, was built during British rule alongside what was once a small village directly across the Indus river from the historic city of Rohri. It is about 350 km. Upriver from Hyderabad. The British established a military garrison here in 1839, which was abandoned in 1845, though Sukkur continued to grow in importance as a trading center.

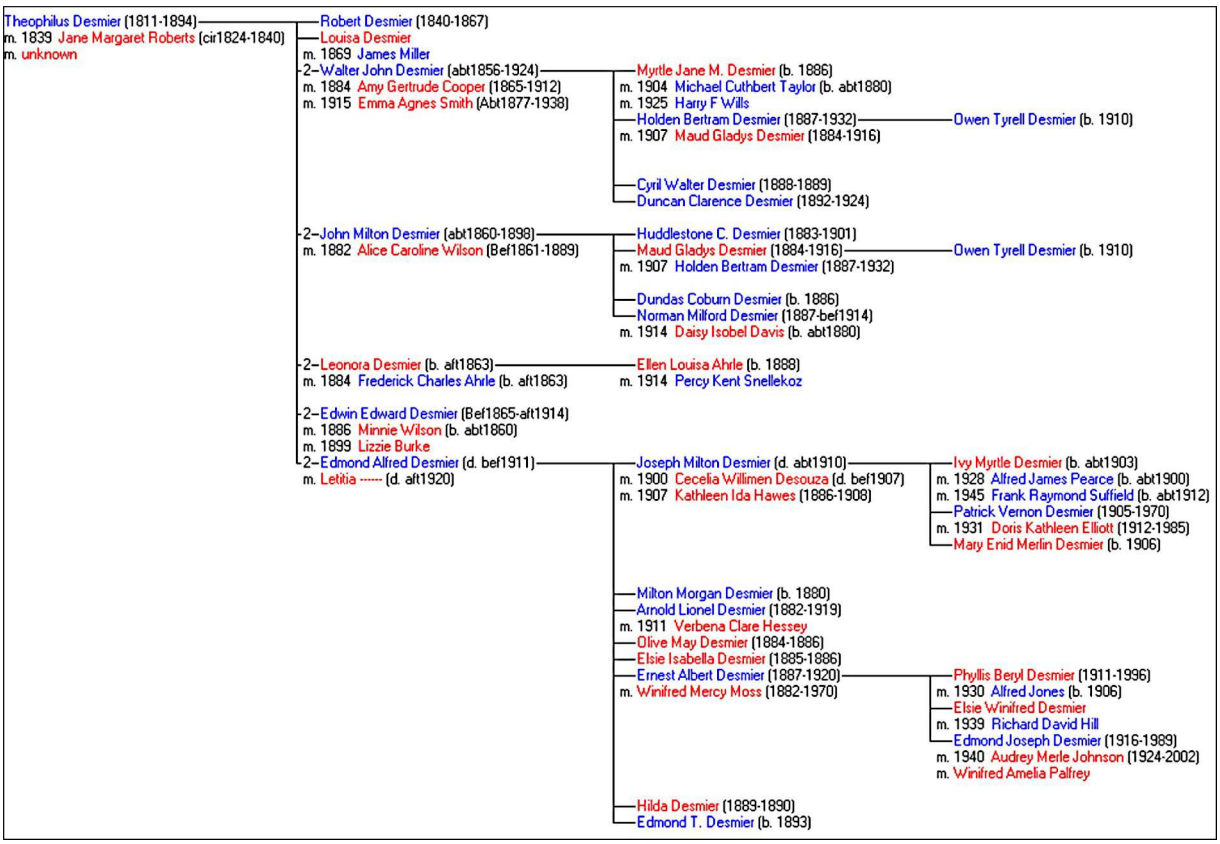
Sources: The Bombay Commercial Calendar and General Directory (1845) accessed through Archive.org; Fibis Wiki; Wikipaedia

Western India
Showing location of Calicut and other towns associated with Jean Marie Charles Desmier
And
Hyderabad, Sind and other towns associated with the children of George Desmier

Adapted from Imperial Gazeteer Atlas of India 1909 railway map

Chapter 6

THEOPHILUS DESMIER


Theophilus Desmier (1811-1894)
m. 1839 Jane Margaret Roberts (cir1824-1840)
m. unknown
Robert Desmier (1840-1867)
Louisa Desmier
m. 1869 James Miller
2–Walter John Desmier (abt1856-1924)
m. 1884 Amy Gertrude Cooper (1865-1912)
m. 1915 Emma Agnes Smith (Abt1877-1938)
Myrtle Jane M. Desmier (b. 1886)
m. 1904 Michael Cuthbert Taylor (b. abt1880)
m. 1925 Harry F Wills
Holden Bertram Desmier (1887-1932)
m. 1907 Maud Gladys Desmier (1884-1916)
Owen Tyrell Desmier (b. 1910)
Cyril Walter Desmier (1888-1889)
Duncan Clarence Desmier (1892-1924)
2–John Milton Desmier (abt1860-1898)
m. 1882 Alice Caroline Wilson (Bef1861-1889)
Huddlestone C. Desmier (1883-1901)
Maud Gladys Desmier (1884-1916)
m. 1907 Holden Bertram Desmier (1887-1932)
Owen Tyrell Desmier (b. 1910)
Dundas Coburn Desmier (b. 1886)
Norman Milford Desmier (1887-bef1914)
m. 1914 Daisy Isobel Davis (b. abt1880)
2–Leonora Desmier (b. aft1863)
m. 1884 Frederick Charles Ahrle (b. aft1863)
Ellen Louisa Ahrle (b. 1888)
m. 1914 Percy Kent Snellekoz
2–Edwin Edward Desmier (Bef1865-aft1914)
m. 1886 Minnie Wilson (b. abt1860)
m. 1899 Lizzie Burke
2–Edmond Alfred Desmier (d. bef1911)
m. Letitia ------ (d. aft1920)
Joseph Milton Desmier (d. abt1910)
m. 1900 Cecelia Willimen Desouza (d. bef1907)
m. 1907 Kathleen Ida Hawes (1886-1908)
Ivy Myrtle Desmier (b. abt1903)
m. 1928 Alfred James Pearce (b. abt1900)
m. 1945 Frank Raymond Suffield (b. abt1912)
Patrick Vernon Desmier (1905-1970)
m. 1931 Doris Kathleen Elliott (1912-1985)
Mary Enid Merlin Desmier (b. 1906)
Milton Morgan Desmier (b. 1880)
Arnold Lionel Desmier (1882-1919)
m. 1911 Verbena Clare Hessey
Olive May Desmier (1884-1886)
Elsie Isabella Desmier (1885-1886)
Ernest Albert Desmier (1887-1920)
m. Winifred Mercy Moss (1882-1970)
Phyllis Beryl Desmier (1911-1996)
m. 1930 Alfred Jones (b. 1906)
Elsie Winifred Desmier
m. 1939 Richard David Hill
Edmond Joseph Desmier (1916-1989)
m. 1940 Audrey Merle Johnson (1924-2002)
m. Winifred Amelia Palfrey
Hilda Desmier (1889-1890)
Edmond T. Desmier (b. 1893)

Robert Desmier

Son of Theophilus Desmier and Jane Margaret Roberts

Robert's mother was only 16 years old when Robert was born in Calicut. She died when Robert was about 10 weeks old. In 1864 Robert is listed as a Junior Lieutenant in the army of the Maharaja of Baroda. In January 1867 both Robert and his father were listed in the debtors court. He was described as unemployed and his father, Theophilus' occupation was recorded as a milner. They again were mentioned in court in April of that year seeking to have the debt discharged but it was postponed for two months. Robert died one month later when he was 26 years old (Allens Indian Mail 20/6/1867, p497).

DeSilva, W., Signaller, Sind Railway Telegraph, Mayting.
Desmier, Charles, Clerk, Magistrate's Office, Nowshera, (Upper Sind.)
Desmier, George, Clerk, Executive Engineer's Office, Hydrabad (Scinde).
Desmier, Robert, Junior Lieutenant, Guicowar's Service, Baroda.
Desmier, Theophilus, Lieut., 3rd Regt. Guicowar's Troops, Baroda.
DeSouza, Angelino, Sub-Assistant Surgeon, Charitable Dispensary, Bandora.

Listing of Desmier names
Bombay Almanack and Directory 1864

Walter John Desmier

1st child of Theophilus Desmier and unknown wife

Walter was a Fireman with the Great Indian Peninsular Railway (GIP) at the time of his marriage to Amy Gertrude Cooper in Byculla, Bombay. Amy was 19 and Walter about 28 years old. They had four children before Amy died of Hepatitis at the age of 47. Walter by then (1912) was an Engine Driver with the GIP.

Three years after Amy's death Walter married widow Emma Agnes Smith (daughter of Henry Black). At the time of his marriage to Emma, Walter's occupation was described as 'mechanical'. A death extract for a Walter Desmire, 68 years old, has been found for 1924. His occupation was recorded as an 'Inspector for the Bombay municipality' and he is stated as being an Irish Anglo-Indian' Emma's death extract shows her as dying as an 'Anglo Indian widow' in 1938.

Myrtle Jane Desmier

1st child of Walter Desmier & his first wife Amy

When Myrtle was born in 1886 the family was living in Nagpur about 800 km north-east of Bombay. Father, Walter, was working as an Engine Driver for the Maharatha Railway there. She married Michael Taylor in 1904 at the office of the Bombay Marriage Registrar. Her middle name was recorded as Madeline and not Jane as was recorded on her baptism. Michael's occupation was recorded as 'nil'.

Holden Bertram Desmier

2nd child of Walter Desmier & Amy

Holden was born in 1887 in Bombay. He married his first cousin Maud Gladys Desmier at the registrar's Office in Bombay in 1907. Maud died in 1916 of pneumonia and was buried at the Sewri cemetery in Bombay. Holden's occupation was recorded as a Permanent Way Inspector. Permanent Way inspectors were responsible for overseeing the condition of the tracks and infrastructures such as bridges. Holden and Maud are known to have had at least one child, Owen Tyrell Desmier, born 1911 in Byculla, Bombay.

Old photo (colourised) of a Permanent Way Inspector checking the railway tracks source:http://kallivalli.blogspot.com/2015/08/

Holden died at Lonavala, a hill station near Poona, in 1932 when he would have been about 45 years old. His occupation was recorded as a retired Permanent Way Inspector with the GIP railways. Probate of 6,384 rupees was granted to Mrs Alice Desmier (Maud's mother) also living at Lonavala.

Cyril Walter Desmier

3rd child of Walter Desmier & Amy

Cyril was born in 1839 at Jhansi when his father was working as an Engine Driver for the Indian Midland Railway. He died eight months later. The cause of death was recorded as teething.

Duncan Clarence Desmier

4th child of Walter Desmier & Amy

Duncan was born at Jhansi in 1892 when his father was a driver for the Indian Midland railway. He died of pneumonia in 1924 and was buried at the Sewri cemetery in Bombay. His occupation had been a commission salesman. No record of marriage has been found.

John Milton Desmier

2nd son of Theophilus Desmier

A birth record has not been found for John Milton Desmier but his death registration suggests he was born about 1860. He married Alice Caroline Wilson in 1882 at Byculla and at that time he was working as a Municipal Inspector with the Health Department. He died of heat apoplexy in 1898 (38 years old). John and Alice had four children (following).

Huddlestone Cyril Mark Desmier

1st son of John Milton Desmier & Alice

Huddlestone was born in 1883 in Girgaum, Bombay but died of enteric fever when he was 17 years old. At the time he was a pupil teacher at the St Peter's Boys School, Mazagoan.

Maud Gladys Desmier

Daughter of John Milton Desmier & Alice

Maud married her cousin Holden as mentioned above. She died in 1916 of pleural pneumonia when their son, Owen, was five years old. Nothing more is known about Owen.

Dundas Coburn Desmier

2nd son of John Milton Desmier & Alice

Dundas was born in 1886 in Christ Church, Byculla. No other information has been found.

Norman Milford Desmier

3rd son of John Milton Desmier & Alice

Norman was baptised in Byculla in 1887. When he married widow, Daisy Isobel Davis in 1914. He was 24 years old and employed as a customs officer. Daisy was a 34 year old widow and a saleswoman for the Singer Sewing Machine Company.

Leonora Desmier

Daughter of Theophilus Desmier

In 1884 Leonora married Frederick Charles Ludwig Ahrle a photographer. The wedding took place at Christ church Byculla. Leonora was noted as being a minor on the record which implies that she was born after 1863. Their daughter, Ella Louise, (baptised Ellen Louisa in 1888) married a Percy Kent Snellekoz, a railway guard, in 1914 in Bombay. Leonora divorced Frederick in 1910 in London on the grounds of adultery in both Bombay and London in 1910. No further information has been found for either Leonora, Frederick or Ellen.

Edwin Edward Desmier

3rd son of Theophilus Desmier

Edwin and Lizzie Burke were Godparents for Mable Maud Desmier in 1876. Edwin was an engine driver for the Bombay & Peninsular railway in 1866 when he married Minnie Wilson at the Christ church, Byculla. I have not found any record of children but Minnie must have died by 1899 as Edwin is recorded as a widower marrying widow Lizzie Burke (daughter of George Dove) at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Bombay in 1899.

Edmond Alfred Desmier

4th son of Theophilus Desmier

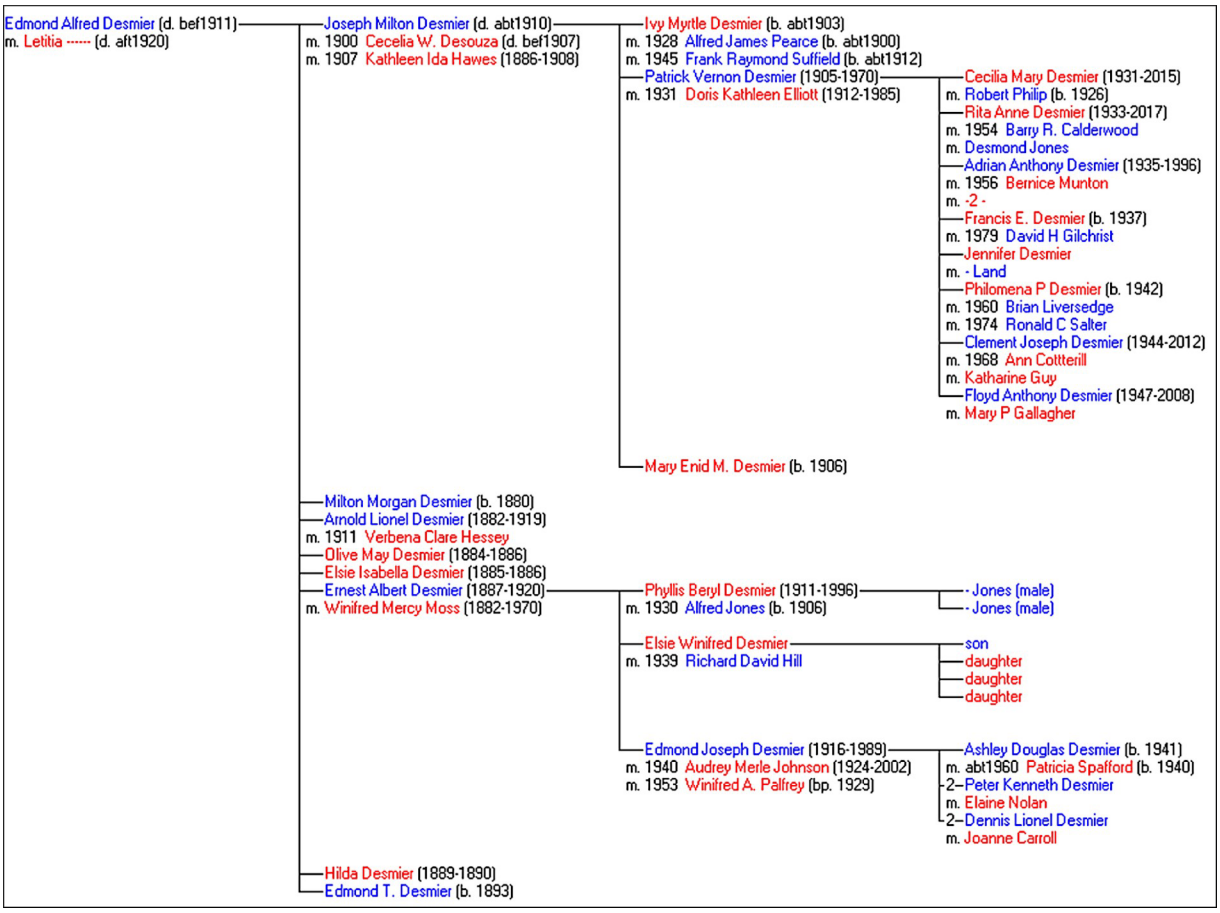
As there is considerable information about Edmond and his descendants I have devoted the following chapter to him.

Old postcard showing the Victoria Railway Terminus building, Bombay Construction completed 1888 Now called Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus

Students with their teacher at the European and Indo-European School, Karachi 1873 (source: British Library)

Chapter 7

EDMOND ALFRED DESMIER & LETITIA


Edmond Alfred Desmier (d. bef1911)
m. Letitia ------ (d. aft1920)
Joseph Milton Desmier (d. abt1910)
m. 1900 Cecelia W. Desouza (d. bef1907)
m. 1907 Kathleen Ida Hawes (1886-1908)
Ivy Myrtle Desmier (b. abt1903)
m. 1928 Alfred James Pearce (b. abt1900)
m. 1945 Frank Raymond Suffield (b. abt1912)
Patrick Vernon Desmier (1905-1970)
m. 1931 Doris Kathleen Elliott (1912-1985)
Cecilia Mary Desmier (1931-2015)
m. Robert Philip (b. 1926)
Rita Anne Desmier (1933-2017)
m. 1954 Barry R. Calderwood
m. Desmond Jones
Adrian Anthony Desmier (1935-1996)
m. 1956 Bernice Munton
m. -2 -
Francis E. Desmier (b. 1937)
m. 1979 David H Gilchrist
Jennifer Desmier
m. - Land
Philomena P Desmier (b. 1942)
m. 1960 Brian Liversedge
m. 1974 Ronald C Salter
Clement Joseph Desmier (1944-2012)
m. 1968 Ann Cotterill
m. Katharine Guy
Floyd Anthony Desmier (1947-2008)
m. Mary P Gallagher
Mary Enid M. Desmier (b. 1906)
Milton Morgan Desmier (b. 1880)
Arnold Lionel Desmier (1882-1919)
m. 1911 Verbena Clare Hessey
Olive May Desmier (1884-1886)
Elsie Isabella Desmier (1885-1886)
Ernest Albert Desmier (1887-1920)
m. Winifred Mercy Moss (1882-1970)
Phyllis Beryl Desmier (1911-1996)
m. 1930 Alfred Jones (b. 1906)
- Jones (male)
- Jones (male)
Elsie Winifred Desmier
m. 1939 Richard David Hill
son
daughter
daughter
daughter
Edmond Joseph Desmier (1916-1989)
m. 1940 Audrey Merle Johnson (1924-2002)
m. 1953 Winifred A. Palfrey (bp. 1929)
Ashley Douglas Desmier (b. 1941)
m. abt1960 Patricia Spalford (b. 1940)
2- Peter Kenneth Desmier
m. Elaine Nolan
2- Dennis Lionel Desmier
m. Joanne Carroll
Hilda Desmier (1889-1890)
Edmond T. Desmier (b. 1893)

In the first edition of this book I was hesitant to identify Edmond as a child of Theophilus, but I now believe that this connection is justified even though I have not been able to find a birth or marriage extract that would confirm that his father was Theophilus. Theophilus' children from his second marriage were born in the Bombay area where most of Edmond's children were baptised; Edmond gave the name Milton to two of his children and that was a name given by Theophilus to one of his children. Edmond also used the name Theophilus for one of his children (a name only found five other times in baptism records in the Bombay presidency 1870-1910).

His wife, Letitia has only been identified from the birth extracts for their children. Eight children were born to the couple between 1880 and 1893. Edmond's occupation was mainly recorded as a mechanic on the birth and death extracts of his children, but he also worked as a carriage examiner for the railways and he was twice recorded as an engineer.

No record of death for either Edmond or Letitia has been found. Edmond is mentioned as deceased on the marriage extract of his son, Arnold, in 1911 and Letitia is mentioned on the tombstone of their

son Ernest who died in 1920 (British Empire & Commonwealth museum Cemetery inscriptions #263), and so she must have been alive then.

Joseph Milton Morgan Desmier

1st son of Edmond Alfred Desmier & Letitia

No record of baptism has been found for Joseph, however, there was a marriage announcement in *The Times of India* (9 June 1900) of his marriage to Cecilia Willimen Desouza at the Rosary chapel in Mazagon, a dockside suburb of Bombay. In the announcement it was stated that Joseph was the eldest son of Edmond Desmier, and he was an extra engineer at the Princes Dock. Joseph and Cecilia had three children; Ivy, Patrick and Mary. No record of Cecilia's death has been found but Joseph married Kathleen Ida Hawes in a Wesleyan Church in 1907. The extract from the Register Book states that Joseph was a widower, and a guard with the railway. Residences for both Joseph and Ida are not clear. It looks like Joseph was from Kolah (a Gold mining region in South India) and Ida was from Jhansi in central India. There is no record as to where the marriage took place on the extract. Family information suggests that Joseph and Ida did not have any children before they died. Rita, a descendant of Joseph and Cecelia, recalled a family legend that they both died of cholera when the children were young and that the surviving children (Ivy and Patrick at least) were raised by their aunt and uncle 'Lizzie and Oliver Regel'. Lizzie was possibly the sister of Joseph's first wife, Cecilia but no records to this effect have been found.

Ivy Myrtle Desmier

1st child of Joseph Milton Morgan Desmier & Cecilia

The age on the extract of marriage for Ivy indicates that she was born in 1903. In 1928 she married bachelor Alfred James Pearce (born Karachi, 1900) at the Catholic cathedral, Lahore. Alfred was a foreman for the Great India Peninsular railway at Bhusawal. about 450 km NE of Bombay. Bhusawal was and still is a major railway junction. Both Ivy and Alfred gave their residence as Bhusawal and so a journey to Lahore, a distance of about 1200 km would have been a major train trip. The witnesses to the marriage were Oliver Regel (a relative and guardian of Ivy and her brother after their parents had died) and her brother Patrick.

Ivy Pearce née Desmier
photo: grand-daughter Janet

A daughter, Daphne, told her own daughter Janet, that she remembered that during WW2 Alfred was a Lieutenant with the army and for a time they lived in the army barracks. They had several children before Alfred died about 1943. Ivy then married Frank Raymond Suffield in Calcutta, 1945 (transcript only available). They immigrated to England and Ivy gave birth to two more children there. Ivy died in Lancashire in 1967.

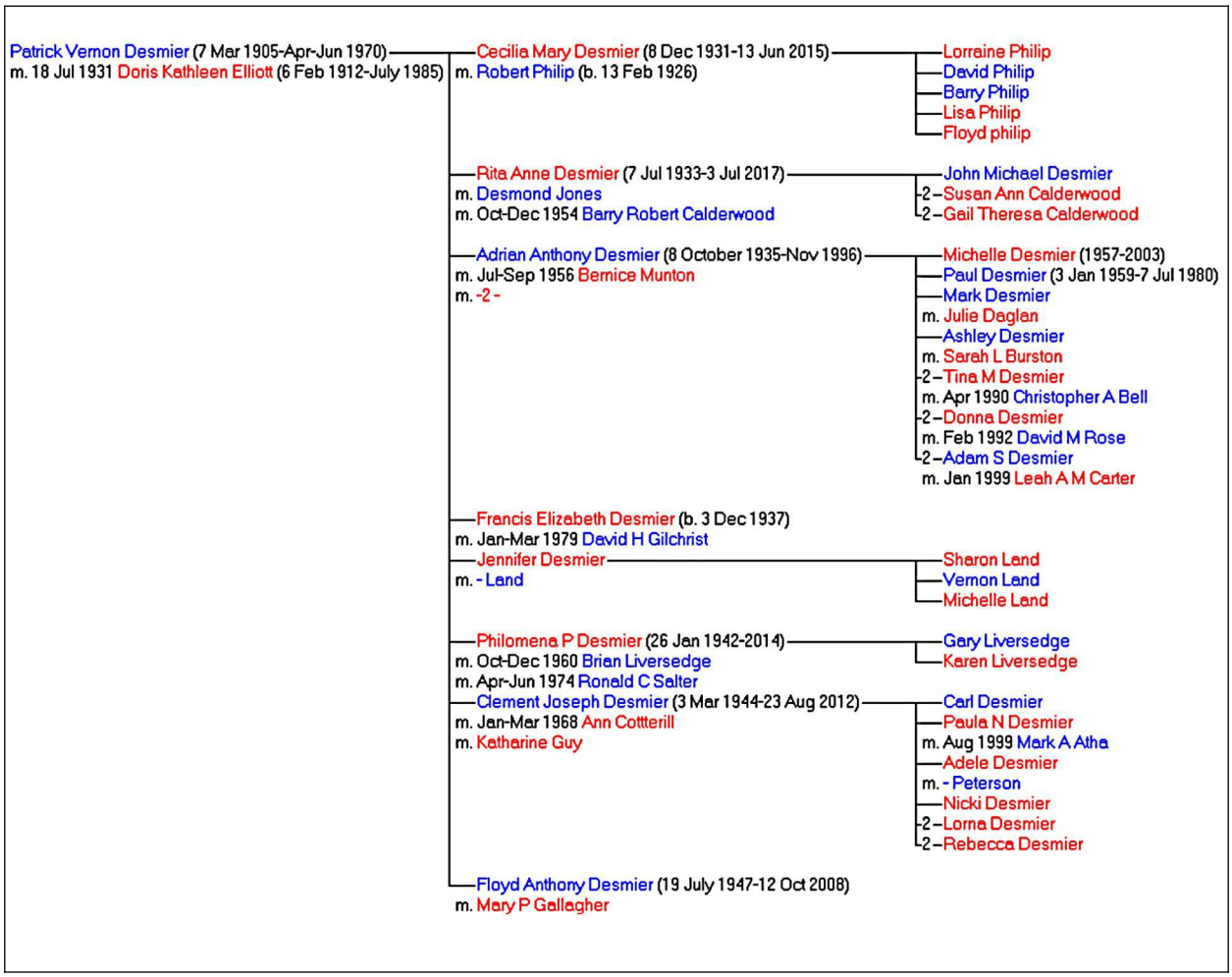
Patrick Vernon Desmier

2nd child of Joseph Milton Morgan Desmier & Cecilia

Patrick was baptised at St Patrick’s Church in Agra in 1905 just 10 days after the baptism of Mable Hilda Kirby (her mother was Mable Maude Desmier, chapter 11). The families must have known each other as both families lived in Agra and probably attended the same church regularly. When Patrick was 26 years old he married 19-year-old Doris Kathleen Elliott. Patrick's occupation was given as 'insurance boy'.

Patrick and Doris went on to have eight children between 1931 and 1948. Patrick is believed to have served with the British army and the Indian army with the family living in Lahore, Agra and New

Delhi before immigrating to Bradford, England. Most of the information about their children was given to me by their daughter Rita and grandson Ashley.


Patrick Vernon Desmier (7 Mar 1905-Apr-Jun 1970)
m. 18 Jul 1931 Doris Kathleen Elliott (6 Feb 1912-July 1985)
Cecilia Mary Desmier (8 Dec 1931-13 Jun 2015)
m. Robert Philip (b. 13 Feb 1926)
Lorraine Philip
David Philip
Barry Philip
Lisa Philip
Floyd philip
Rita Anne Desmier (7 Jul 1933-3 Jul 2017)
m. Desmond Jones
m. Oct-Dec 1954 Barry Robert Calderwood
John Michael Desmier
2 – Susan Ann Calderwood
2 – Gail Theresa Calderwood
Adrian Anthony Desmier (8 October 1935-Nov 1996)
m. Jul-Sep 1956 Bernice Munton
m. -2 -
Michelle Desmier (1957-2003)
Paul Desmier (3 Jan 1959-7 Jul 1980)
Mark Desmier
m. Julie Daglan
Ashley Desmier
m. Sarah L Burston
2 – Tina M Desmier
m. Apr 1990 Christopher A Bell
2 – Donna Desmier
m. Feb 1992 David M Rose
2 – Adam S Desmier
m. Jan 1999 Leah A M Carter
Francis Elizabeth Desmier (b. 3 Dec 1937)
m. Jan-Mar 1979 David H Gilchrist
Jennifer Desmier
m. - Land
Sharon Land
Vernon Land
Michelle Land
Philomena P Desmier (26 Jan 1942-2014)
m. Oct-Dec 1960 Brian Liversedge
m. Apr-Jun 1974 Ronald C Salter
Gary Liversedge
Karen Liversedge
Clement Joseph Desmier (3 Mar 1944-23 Aug 2012)
m. Jan-Mar 1968 Ann Cottterill
m. Katharine Guy
Carl Desmier
Paula N Desmier
m. Aug 1999 Mark A Atha
Adele Desmier
m. - Peterson
Nicki Desmier
2 – Lorna Desmier
2 – Rebecca Desmier
Floyd Anthony Desmier (19 July 1947-12 Oct 2008)
m. Mary P Gallagher

Cecilia Mary Desmier

1st child of Patrick Vernon Desmier & Doris

Born in Lahore in 1931 Cecilia married Robert Philip. They had five children; Lorraine, David, Barry, Lisa and Floyd.

Rita Anne Desmier

2nd child of Patrick Vernon Desmier & Doris

Rita, born in Lahore in 1933, married Barry Robert Calderwood in 1954 in Bradford and they had two children Susan and Gail. Rita's son John was born during an earlier relationship. Barry's family were bakers in Sussex and Barry worked in the family business.

By a strange coincidence Rita and her family bought a house in the same road in Burgess Hill, Sussex that my parents farm was in. It was only when some mail was delivered to our house

Rita & Barry with their daughters and Alma Desmier with son Rick

by mistake that we found out that Rita's maiden name was Desmier and our families then became friends.

In 1964 the family immigrated to Western Australia. Barry worked for the Foreign Affairs Department and this work took the family to many countries including Papua New Guinea, Russia and Poland. Their children and families now live in Western Australia and Queensland.

Rita died in 2017 in Queensland, Australia.

Adrian Anthony Cedric Desmier

3rd child of Patrick Vernon Desmier & Doris

Adrian, known as Danny in the family, was born in Lahore in 1935. After the family had immigrated to England Danny married Bernice Munton in Bradford in 1956. They had four children; Michelle, Paul, Mark and Ashley. There were three children from a second marriage; Tina, Donna and Adam.

Danny died in 1996 of cancer. His son Paul died when he was twenty-one years old in 1980 and Michelle died in 2003.

Francis Elizabeth Janet Desmier

4th child of Patrick Vernon Desmier & Doris

Francis was born in Delhi in 1937, her father's occupation at that time was recorded as 'commercial' as were several others on the same extract sheet. In 1979, she married David H. Gilchrist in Bradford. No more is known of the family.

Jennifer Desmier

5th child of Patrick Vernon Desmier & Doris

No record of birth or marriage has been found for Jennifer, however, family information suggests that she married a Bernard Land and had at least three sons.

Philomena P Desmier

6th child of Patrick Vernon Desmier & Doris

Philomena Desmier
source: Gary Salter

Philomena was born in New Delhi in 1942. In 1960 she married Brian Liversedge in Bradford. Her second marriage was to Ronald Salter. They are known to have had three children. Philomena died in 1972.

Clementine Desmier

7th child of Patrick Vernon Desmier & Doris

Clementine was born about 1944 (no record found). In 1968 Clement, who preferred to be called Butch, married Ann Cotterill. They had four children Carl, Paula, Adele and Nicki. Later Butch had two more children, Lorna and Becky (Rebecca) with his second partner Katharine Guy. He was a keen amateur musician and played a guitar.

In 2012, 68-year-old Butch was the subject of a robbery/ home invasion and was brutally murdered by the two invaders. They were eventually caught and sentenced to a combined sentence of 50 years without parole (*Bradford Telegraph & Argus 23 March 2016*).

Clement Joseph (Butch) Desmier

Floyd A Desmier

8th child of Patrick Vernon Desmier & Doris

Floyd was born in 1947 (no birth extract found). He married Mary Gallagher in 1997 in Bradford. He was 61 years old when he died in Bradford in 2008.

Mary Enid Merlin Desmier

3rd child of Joseph Milton Morgan Desmier & Cecilia

Mary was born in Agra in 1906 when her father was unemployed. No further information has been found. It is likely that she died young as there is only mention in family stories of her elder sister and brother being raised by their aunt and uncle after their parents died of cholera.

Milton Morgan Desmier

2nd child of Edmond Alfred Desmier & Letitia

Milton was born in 1880 and baptised about six months later in Mazagon, Bombay. His parents' residence was recorded as Omercari, thought to be an old suburb of Bombay. No further information has been found.

Arnold Lionel Desmier

3rd child of Edmond Alfred Desmier & Letitia

When Arnold was born in 1882 his father was a carriage examiner for the GIP railway in Nagpur (mothers name written as Louisa not Letitia on the extract). When he married Verbena Clare Hessey in Poona in 1911 he was working as a turf accountant (fathers name recorded as Albert instead of Alfred. Both were 'of full age' and Arnold's father was noted as deceased. No information with respect to children has been found. Arnold died in 1919 of emphysema in Bombay.

Olive May Desmier

4th child of Edmond Alfred Desmier & Letitia

Olive was born in 1884 and died 2½ years later of tabes mesentrica which is a type of tuberculosis.

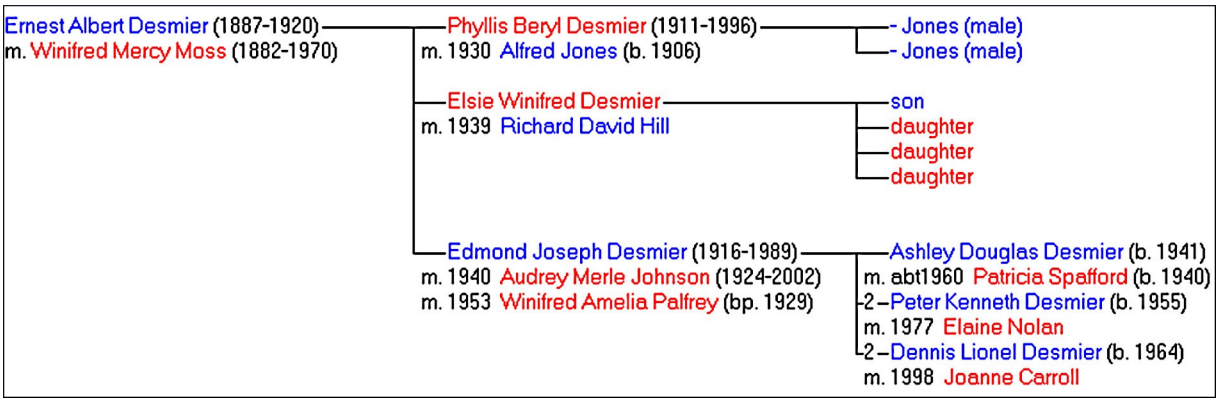
Elsie Isabella Desmier

5th child of Edmond Alfred Desmier & Letitia

Elsie was baptised in 1885 at St Peter's church in Mazagon, Bombay. She was buried 15 months later in the Sewri cemetery, Bombay. She died of bronchitis and pneumonia associated with teething.

Ernest Albert Desmier

6th child of Edmond Desmier & Letitia


Ernest Albert Desmier (1887-1920)
m. Winifred Mercy Moss (1882-1970)
Phyllis Beryl Desmier (1911-1996)
m. 1930 Alfred Jones (b. 1906)
- Jones (male)
- Jones (male)
Elsie Winifred Desmier
m. 1939 Richard David Hill
son
daughter
daughter
daughter
Edmond Joseph Desmier (1916-1989)
m. 1940 Audrey Merle Johnson (1924-2002)
m. 1953 Winifred Amelia Palfrey (bp. 1929)
Ashley Douglas Desmier (b. 1941)
m. abt1960 Patricia Spafford (b. 1940)
2 – Peter Kenneth Desmier (b. 1955)
m. 1977 Elaine Nolan
2 – Dennis Lionel Desmier (b. 1964)
m. 1998 Joanne Carroll

Ernest was born in 1887 in Bombay. It is not known when or where he married Winifred Mercy Moss, however her baptism extract indicates that she was five years older than Ernest and born in Purasawalkam, now an inner suburb of Madras. They had three children before Ernest died in 1920 in Nagpur (approx 800 km NE of Bombay). The inscription on his tomb reads:

In ever loving memory of my darling husband Ernest Albert Desmier born 22 December 1887, died 22 June 1920. Deeply mourned by his heartbroken wife, children and mother. (source :British Empire & Commonwealth Cemetery Inscriptions, Inscription #263).

Ernest's wife, Winifred, died in 1970 in Ashton, Lancashire aged 89. Much of the following information about their children and families was passed to me by the wives of their son Edmond Joseph Desmier.

Phyllis Beryl Desmier

1st child of Ernest Albert Desmier & Winifred

When Phyllis was born in 1911 her father was a guard with the railways (GIP) and they were living in Bombay. She was 18 when she married 24 year old Alfred Jones. I cannot read what his occupation was on the marriage extract but it does not look to be associated with the railways. They had two sons according to Winifred (née Palfrey).

Phyllis died in Warwickshire, England in 1996.

Elsie Desmier

2nd child of Ernest Albert Desmier & Winifred

Winifred (née Moss) recalled that Elsie had a son and three daughters but couldn't remember her husband's name.

Edmond Charles Desmier

3rd child of Ernest Albert Desmier & Winifred

Edmond, known as Ned to his family, was born in 1916. In 1940 he married fifteen-year-old Audrey Merle Johnson. Audrey's father was a customs and excise officer and her mother's family ran a bakery. Ned was a lodger in the Johnson house and a relationship developed between him and Audrey. They married and their son Ashley Douglas was born in 1941. Shortly after Ashley's birth, Ned left his job as a fitter in a workshop and joined the British Army. He was posted to the middle east for a couple of years and when he returned to India they lived in army quarters in Peshawar. The marriage had difficulties and before long they separated. Audrey, with Ashley and her mother and two sisters, immigrated to England. They settled in Doncaster where Audrey's mother ran a boarding house.

Ned remained in India and filed for divorce in 1952 on the grounds of irreconcilable differences. Ashley grew up and joined the Royal Air Force. He married Patricia and in 1967 immigrated to Victoria, Australia.

Audrey died in 2002 in Doncaster, Victoria.

In 1952 Ned's second marriage was to Winifred Amelia Palfrey in Karachi in 1953 at the register Office. They soon immigrated to England and settled in the Manchester area. They had two sons Peter Kenneth Desmier and Dennis Lionel Desmier and both have families in England.

Ned died in Manchester in 1989.

Hilda Desmier

7th child of Edmond Desmier & Letitia

Hilda was born in 1889 and baptised at St Peter's church, Bombay. She died of diarrhoea 14 months later.

Edmond Theophilus Desmier

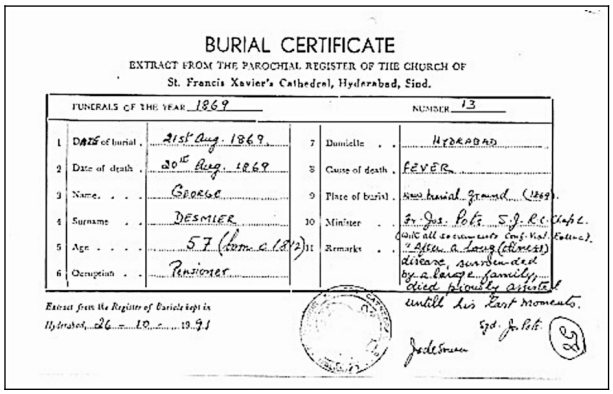
8th child of Edmond Desmier & Letitia

Edmond was born in 1893 and baptised in Bhusawal about 300km NE of Bombay. His father Edmond was still working as a mechanic. No other record has been found.

Lahore

Located in the Punjab, Lahore is now in Pakistan about 1,200 km north east of Karachi. The British took control of the area from the Sikh rulers in 1846 when there was infighting following the death of the then ruler. The original city was considered to be unhealthy and so British development and expansion took place in an area known as the civil station to the south east. The main railway station was constructed shortly after the revolution of 1857 and so it was constructed to double as a fortified defence building in case of any further uprising. The Punjab (meaning five rivers) is a prosperous area resulting from large scale irrigation of crops from the rivers. The British constructed extensive canal networks to increase the production of crops such as cotton, grains and rice. The town was the focus for the push to create the separate country of Pakistan and was at the centre of the massacre of Hindus and Muslims moving across the border between the two countries when independence was granted.

Lahore Railway Station in 1880's (public domain)



BURIAL CERTIFICATE

EXTRACT FROM THE PAROCHIAL REGISTER OF THE CHURCH OF
St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Hyderabad, Sind.

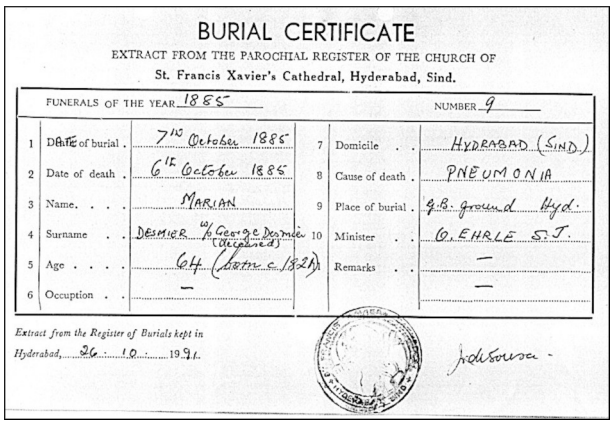
FUNERALS OF THE YEAR 1869 NUMBER 13

1	DATE of burial	21st Aug. 1869.	7	Domicile	HYDERABAD
2	Date of death	20th Aug. 1869	8	Cause of death	FEVER
3	Name	GEORGE	9	Place of burial	new burial Ground (1869).
4	Surname	DESMIER	10	Minister	Fr. Jos. Pelz S.J. R.C. Vicar.
5	Age	57 (born c 1812)	11	Remarks	Quite all sacraments conf. Nat. Rites. "After a long (almost) disease, sorrowfully assisted by a large family, died piously & resigned until his last moments.
6	Occupation	Pensioner			

Extract from the Register of Burials kept in Hyderabad, 26 - 10 - 1991

Jos. J. Pelz

Jos. DeSouza



BURIAL CERTIFICATE

EXTRACT FROM THE PAROCHIAL REGISTER OF THE CHURCH OF
St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Hyderabad, Sind.

FUNERALS OF THE YEAR 1885 NUMBER 9

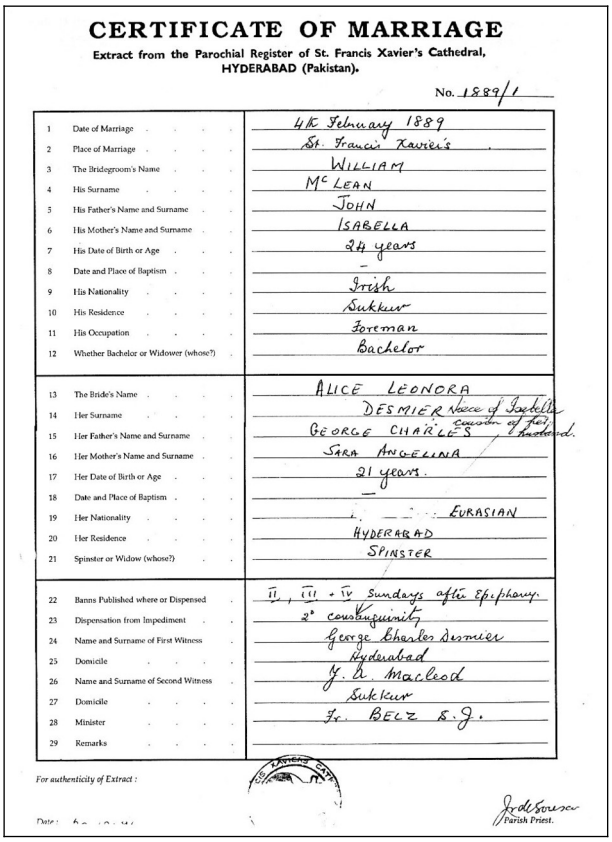
1	DATE of burial	7th October 1885	7	Domicile	HYDERABAD (SIND)
2	Date of death	6th October 1885	8	Cause of death	PNEUMONIA
3	Name	MARIAN	9	Place of burial	G.B. Ground Hyd.
4	Surname	DESMIER w/o George Desmier (deceased)	10	Minister	G. EHRLE S.J.
5	Age	64 (born c 1821)	11	Remarks	—
6	Occupation	—			—

Extract from the Register of Burials kept in Hyderabad, 26 10 1991.

Jos DeSouza

George Desmier Burial certificate

Marianna Burial certificate



CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE

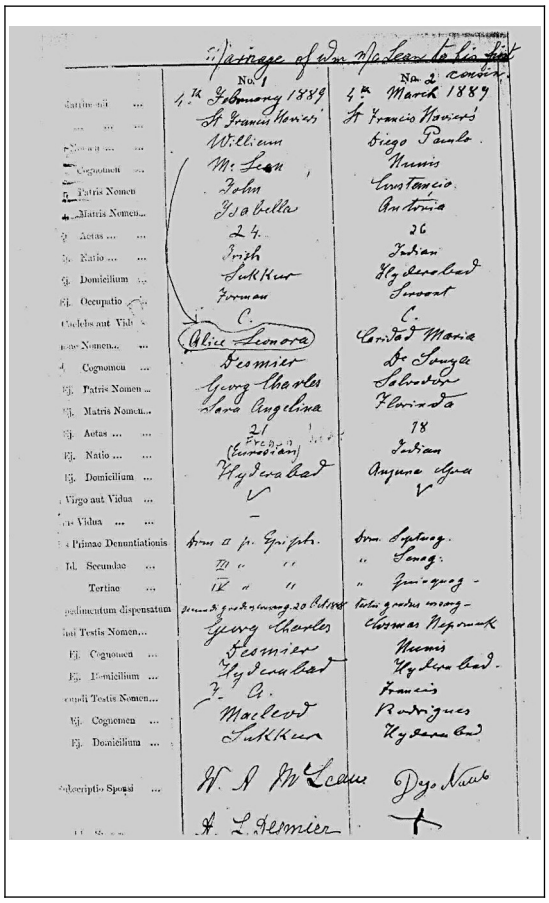
Extract from the Parochial Register of St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral, HYDERABAD (Pakistan).

No. 1889/1

1	Date of Marriage	4th February 1889
2	Place of Marriage	St. Francis Xavier's
3	The Bridegroom's Name	WILLIAM
4	His Surname	Mc LEAN
5	His Father's Name and Surname	JOHN
6	His Mother's Name and Surname	ISABELLA
7	His Date of Birth or Age	24 years
8	Date and Place of Baptism	—
9	His Nationality	Irish
10	His Residence	Sukkur
11	His Occupation	Foreman
12	Whether Bachelor or Widower (whose?)	Bachelor
13	The Bride's Name	ALICE LEONORA
14	Her Surname	DESMIER Niece of Isabella
15	Her Father's Name and Surname	GEORGE CHARLES Cousin of her husband.
16	Her Mother's Name and Surname	SARA ANGELINA
17	Her Date of Birth or Age	21 years.
18	Date and Place of Baptism	—
19	Her Nationality	EURASIAN
20	Her Residence	HYDERABAD
21	Spinster or Widow (whose?)	SPINSTER
22	Banns Published where or Dispensed	II, III + IV Sundays after Epiphany.
23	Dispensation from Impediment	2° consanguinity
24	Name and Surname of First Witness	George Charles Desmier
25	Domicile	Hyderabad
26	Name and Surname of Second Witness	J. A. Macleod
27	Domicile	Sukkur
28	Minister	Fr. Belz S.J.
29	Remarks	

For authenticity of Extract :

Jos DeSouza
Parish Priest.



Marriage of Wm McLean to his first cousin

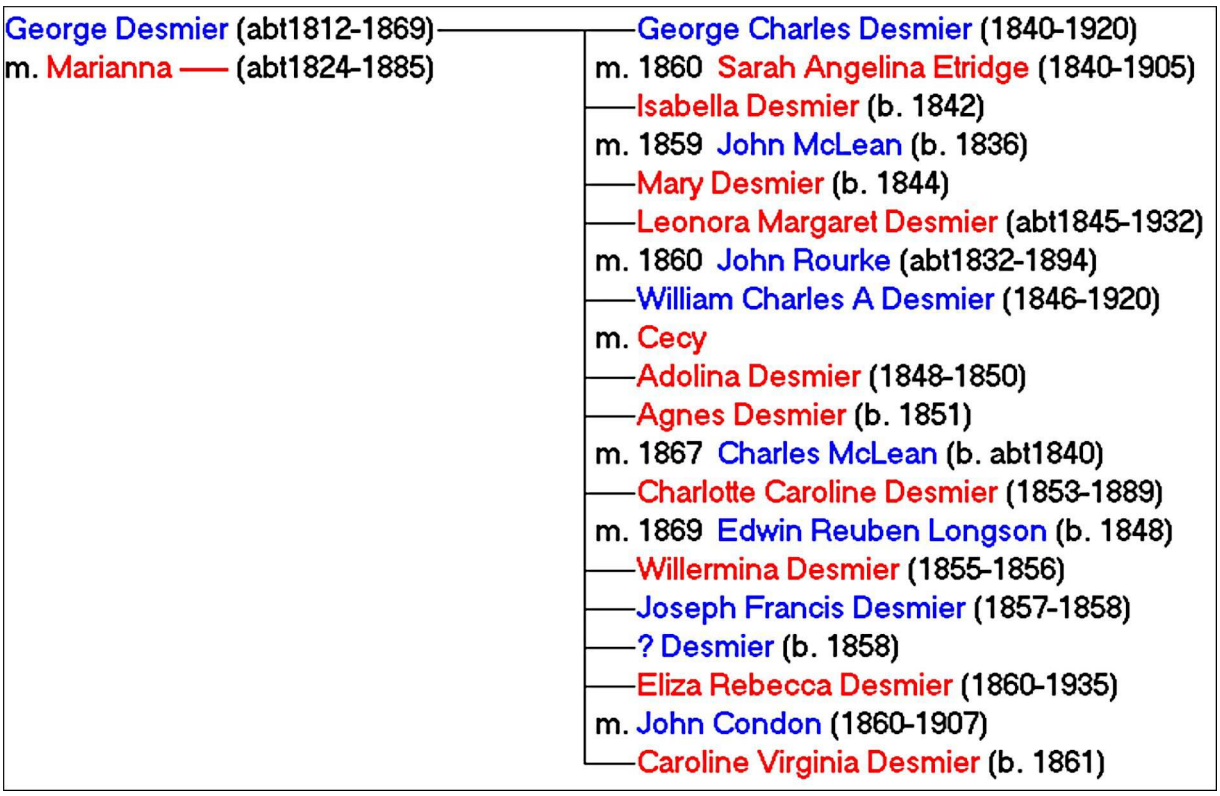
	No. 1	No. 2
Baptismi ...	4.th February 1889	4th March 1889
... ...	St Francis Xaviers	St Francis Xaviers
Nomen ...	William	Diego Paulo
Cognomen	Mc Lean	Nunis
Patris Nomen	John	Constancio
Matris Nomen...	Isabella	Antonia
Aetas ...	24	26
Natio ...	Irish	Indian
Domicilium	Sukkur	Hyderabad
Occupatio	Foreman	Servant
Caelebs aut Vidu	C.	C.
Nomen ...	(Alice Leonora)	Caridad Maria
Cognomen	Desmier	de Souza
Patris Nomen ...	Geo. Charles	Salvador
Matris Nomen...	Sara Angelina	Florinda
Aetas ...	21 (Eurasian)	18
Natio ...	Hyderabad	Indian
Domicilium		Angana Agra
Virgo aut Vidua	—	V
Primae Denuntiationis	from 2 p. Epiphn.	from Septuag.
Secundae	III " "	" Sexag.
Tertiae	IV " "	" Quinquag.
Impedimentum dispensatum	from 2 cons. Quinquag. 2 Affinit.	Inter quartos mixtos
Nomen Testis	Geo. Charles	Thomas Raymond
Cognomen	Desmier	Nunis
Domicilium	Hyderabad	Hyderabad
Nomen Testis	J. A.	Francis
Cognomen	Macleod	Rodrigues
Domicilium	Sukkur	Hyderabad
Subscriptio Sponsi	W. A. Mc Lean	Diego Nunis
	A. L. Desmier	

Marriage of William Arthur McLean (son of Isabella Desmier) to his cousin Alice Leonora Desmier (1889) Image on the left is an extract from the cathedral register sent to Robert Gibbs. The image on the right is thought to be a copy of the return (No 1) sent to London in 1889,

Old postcard of the Victoria railway terminus building- construction completed 1888

Chapter 8

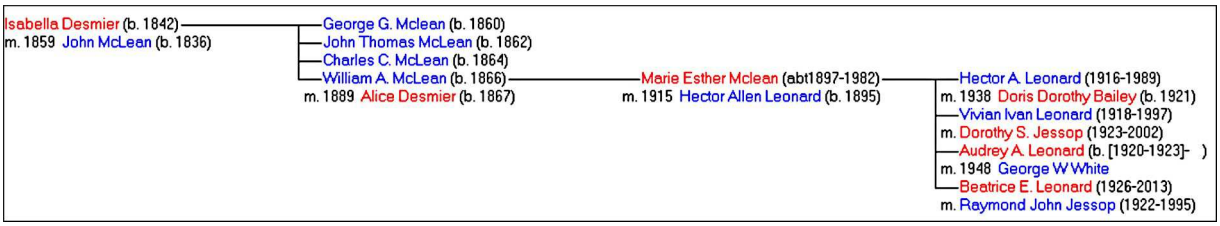
GEORGE DESMIER & MARIANNA
THEIR CHILDREN WITH FEW KNOWN DESCENDANTS


George Desmier (abt1812-1869)
m. Marianna —— (abt1824-1885)
George Charles Desmier (1840-1920)
m. 1860 Sarah Angelina Etridge (1840-1905)
Isabella Desmier (b. 1842)
m. 1859 John McLean (b. 1836)
Mary Desmier (b. 1844)
Leonora Margaret Desmier (abt1845-1932)
m. 1860 John Rourke (abt1832-1894)
William Charles A Desmier (1846-1920)
m. Cecy
Adolina Desmier (1848-1850)
Agnes Desmier (b. 1851)
m. 1867 Charles McLean (b. abt1840)
Charlotte Caroline Desmier (1853-1889)
m. 1869 Edwin Reuben Longson (b. 1848)
Willermina Desmier (1855-1856)
Joseph Francis Desmier (1857-1858)
? Desmier (b. 1858)
Eliza Rebecca Desmier (1860-1935)
m. John Condon (1860-1907)
Caroline Virginia Desmier (b. 1861)

In this chapter I have grouped together the children of George and Marianna Desmier that I do not have much information on. The descendants of George Charles, Leonora Margaret and Eliza Rebecca follow in separate chapters (and for clarity, some of those families have been further subdivided into separate chapters). Most of the birth and marriage information was received directly from St Xaviers Cathedral in Hyderabad in response to a request by descendant Robert Gibbs.

Isabella Desmier

Daughter of George Desmier & Marianna


Isabella Desmier (b. 1842)
m. 1859 John McLean (b. 1836)
George G. Mclean (b. 1860)
John Thomas McLean (b. 1862)
Charles C. McLean (b. 1864)
William A. McLean (b. 1866)
m. 1889 Alice Desmier (b. 1867)
Marie Esther Mclean (abt1897-1982)
m. 1915 Hector Allen Leonard (b. 1895)
Hector A. Leonard (1916-1989)
m. 1938 Doris Dorothy Bailey (b. 1921)
Vivian Ivan Leonard (1918-1997)
m. Dorothy S. Jessop (1923-2002)
Audrey A. Leonard (b. [1920-1923]-)
m. 1948 George W White
Beatrice E. Leonard (1926-2013)
m. Raymond John Jessop (1922-1995)

Isabella was probably the second child of George and Marianna. No baptism record has been found but in 1859, when she was 16 years and two months old, she married 23-year-old John McLean, a

clerk in Hyderabad of (reputed) Irish descent. They had a son, William (b. 1865) who, in 1889, married George Charles Desmier's daughter, Alice Leonora (his cousin) by special licence. Alice was three years his junior. William was a foreman working in Sukkur when he married Alice. They had at least one child, Marie (Mary) Esther McLean. She married Hector Allen Leonard, the son of a railway guard from Ferozapore, in 1915. It is believed that they married in India before immigrating to Kenya where four children were born. In about 1931 Marie and Hector and the two young daughters immigrated to the UK. The two sons followed them to the UK at a later date.

I have a DNA genetic match to three descendants from this family. Laraine Jessop and Carl and Matthew Tomlinson (refer chapter 23). As Carl and Matthew are both descended from a cousin marriage, they are linked to our common ancestral couple in two ways and so the strength of the DNA match to me is higher than what would normally be expected for either of the relationships individually.

Mary Desmier

Daughter of George Desmier & Marianna

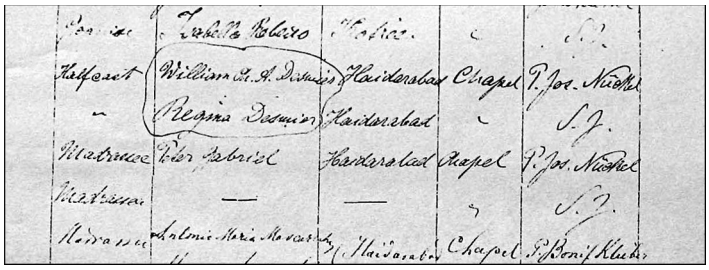
A notice in the Bombay Times announced the birth of a daughter to the wife of G. Desmire on 26 December 1844. This is assumed to be Mary. A Mary Desmier was recorded as a Godmother to her niece Regina Desmier in 1861.

William Charles Desmier

Son of George Desmier & Marianna

William Charles Desmier (1846-1920)
m. Cecy
Angelina Louise Desmier (b. bef1899)
m. 1920 Duncan Cyril C. North (b. bef1899)
Lillian C. Desmier (abt1902-1961)
Reginald Charles Peters (1926-1991)
m. 1924 Arthur Charles Peters (b. abt1902)
Antonina Alice Desmier (b. 1906)
m. 1925 Eric John Birch (b. 1897)

There is a brief, undated, extract of births showing that a 'William Ch. A. Desmier' was baptised in the chapel at Haiderabad (Hyderabad) about the same time as a Regina Desmier but the year or parents names are not recorded (obtained from an LDS microfilm I think).



It is likely that William was the son of George and Marianna and was baptised at the same time as Regina, the first child of George Charles Desmier and Sarah. There are baptism extracts for children of George and Marianna (George Charles' parents) from 1848 to 1861. George's daughter Regina was born in 1861 and baptised two weeks after her birth. She was born about a year after her parents marriage and so William is unlikely to have been the first child of George Charles and Sarah but could possibly be a child of George and Marianna or possibly his brother Charles who was known to be living in Sindh province at least in the 1860's. No Desmiers have been found in later Bombay directories.

Both children were recorded as half-caste. A full copy of the baptism extract for Regina Desmier, daughter of George Charles Desmier has been found and there is no mention of half-caste on that so it

is also possible that they both may be from a different family (although the priest copying the entry in 1991 may have chosen to omit that information!).

Three daughters have been found that have a William Desmier recorded as their father on their marriage extracts.

Angelina Louise married Duncan Cyril North a Motor Mechanic in Bombay in 1920. Lilian married Arthur Charles Peters in Bombay in 1924 and a son, Reginald Charles Peters was born in 1926. A son of this family is known to live in Australia. Alice was baptised in Bangalore and later married Eric John Birch.

No other records have been found for any family member

Adolina Desmier

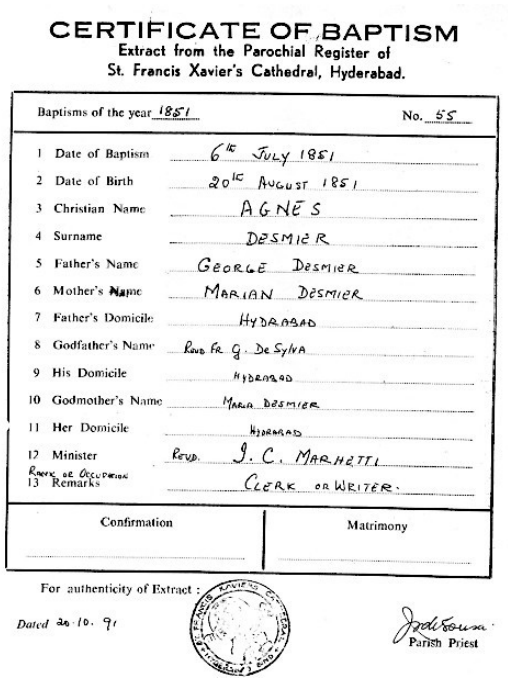
Daughter of George Desmier & Marianna

Adolina was born in May 1848 and baptised when she was one month old. There was a note written on her baptism copy from the cathedral that she died when two years and six months old.

Agnes Desmier

Daughter of George Desmier & Marianna

Agnes was born in 1851. A Maria Desmier (unlikely to be seven-year-old sister Mary?) was named as one of her Godparents. Agnes' father's occupation was recorded as clerk or writer. One week before her 16th birthday she married her brother-in-law, Charles McLean, a 27 year old bachelor and engineer in Karachi. No further information on the family has been found.



CERTIFICATE OF BAPTISM

Extract from the Parochial Register of
St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Hyderabad.

Baptisms of the year 1851 No. 55

1	Date of Baptism	6th JULY 1851
2	Date of Birth	20th AUGUST 1851
3	Christian Name	AGNES
4	Surname	DESMIER
5	Father's Name	GEORGE DESMIER
6	Mother's Name	MARIAN DESMIER
7	Father's Domicile	HYDRABAD
8	Godfather's Name	Revd Fr G. De Silva
9	His Domicile	HYDRABAD
10	Godmother's Name	MARIA DESMIER
11	Her Domicile	HYDRABAD
12	Minister	REVD. J. C. MARHETTI
13	Remarks	CLERK OR WRITER.

Confirmation | Matrimony

For authenticity of Extract :

Dated 20.10.91

Parish Priest

Charlotte Caroline Desmier

Daughter of George Desmier & Marianna

Charlotte was born in October 1853 and baptised one month later in St Xaviers Cathedral, Hyderabad, Sindh like the rest of her siblings. She married in Hyderabad in 1869 (FamilySearch transcription only). The name recorded was Charlotte Caroline Dasmire and her father's name was given as George Dasmire. Her spouses name was written Edwin Reulon Longeon but on the birth records for their children it is written correctly as Edwin Reuben Longson. Edwin was born in 1848 in Trichinopoly and his father was a Store Sergeant and believed to have worked for the East India Company at that time. When Charlotte died in 1889 she was about 36 years old and Edwin was

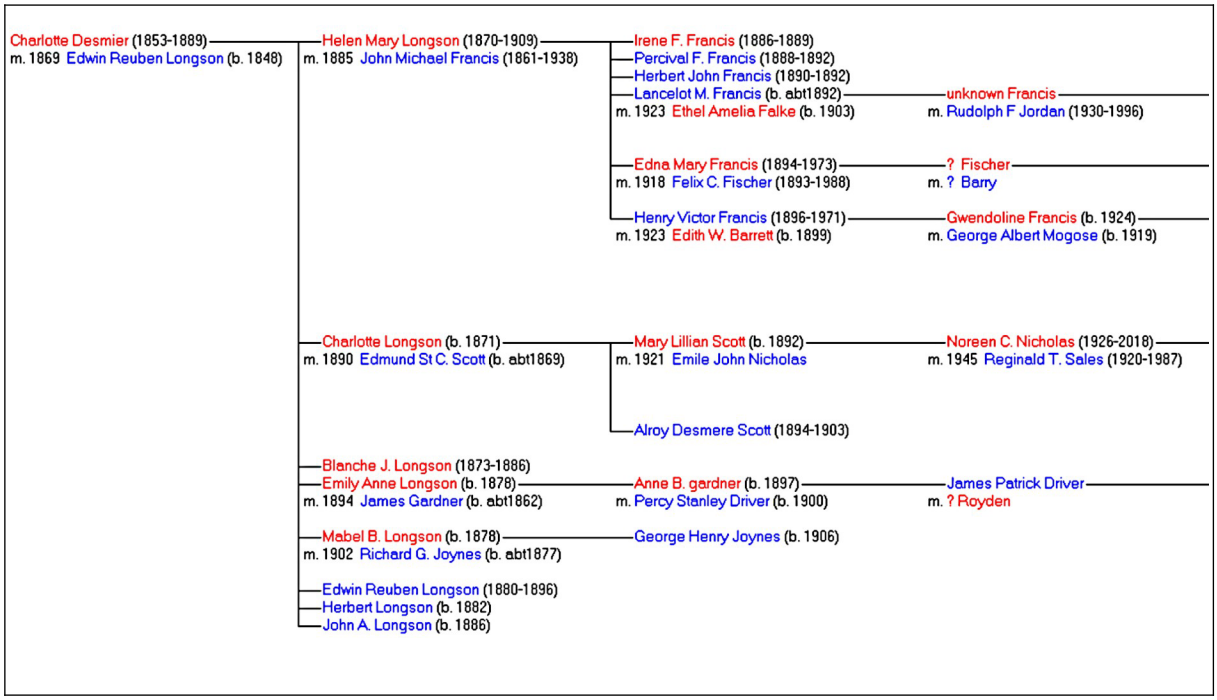
recorded as employed by the telegraph Department. She is believed to have died in Indore which is about 600 km north-east of Bombay.

Charlotte and Edwin's children follow.

Helen Mary Longson

1st child of Charlotte Desmier and Edwin Longson

At the time of the birth of their first child, Helen, in 1870, Edwin was a telegraph clerk in Hyderabad, Sindh. At 15 years old Helen married 24 year old John Michael Francis, a telegraph master. Both Helen (and presumably the rest of her family) and John were residents of Baroda.


Charlotte Desmier (1853-1889)
m. 1869 Edwin Reuben Longson (b. 1848)
Helen Mary Longson (1870-1909)
m. 1885 John Michael Francis (1861-1938)
Irene F. Francis (1886-1889)
Percival F. Francis (1888-1892)
Herbert John Francis (1890-1892)
Lancelot M. Francis (b. abt1892)
m. 1923 Ethel Amelia Falke (b. 1903)
unknown Francis
m. Rudolph F Jordan (1930-1996)
Edna Mary Francis (1894-1973)
m. 1918 Felix C. Fischer (1893-1988)
? Fischer
m. ? Barry
Henry Victor Francis (1896-1971)
m. 1923 Edith W. Barrett (b. 1899)
Gwendoline Francis (b. 1924)
m. George Albert Mogose (b. 1919)
Charlotte Longson (b. 1871)
m. 1890 Edmund St C. Scott (b. abt1869)
Mary Lillian Scott (b. 1892)
m. 1921 Emile John Nicholas
Noreen C. Nicholas (1926-2018)
m. 1945 Reginald T. Sales (1920-1987)
Alroy Desmere Scott (1894-1903)
Blanche J. Longson (1873-1886)
Emily Anne Longson (b. 1878)
m. 1894 James Gardner (b. abt1862)
Anne B. gardner (b. 1897)
m. Percy Stanley Driver (b. 1900)
James Patrick Driver
m. ? Royden
Mabel B. Longson (b. 1878)
m. 1902 Richard G. Joynes (b. abt1877)
George Henry Joynes (b. 1906)
Edwin Reuben Longson (1880-1896)
Herbert Longson (b. 1882)
John A. Longson (b. 1886)

Helen and John had three children in the 5 years following their marriage, born in Sylhet, Gauhati, and Calcutta as John was moved around in his work as a telegraph station master. Sadly all three children died when they were toddlers.

Daughter Edna Mary Francis was born in 1894 and she married Felix Christopher Fischer, a clerk, in Rangoon in 1918. A second child to Helen and John survived to adulthood. Henry Victor Francis was born in 1896. Like his sister he also married in Rangoon. At the time of his marriage to Edith Winifred Barratt in 1923, Henry was employed as an assistant surgeon. Coincidentally Edith's brother, Clarence Barrett, married Ivy Desmier, the daughter of George T. E. Desmier (q.v.) a second cousin of Henry.

I have a DNA match with the grandson of Edna Mary Francis and Felix Christopher Fischer, (Martin Barry). I also have DNA matches with three of the grandchildren of Henry Victor Francis, (Christine,Stephen and Wendy Mogose), with the grandson of Lancelot Francis, (Clint Jordan) and with the great grand-daughter of Emily Anne Longson (Laraine Jessop) (refer chapter 23).

Charlotte Florence Longson

2nd child of Charlotte Desmier and Edwin Longson

Charlotte was born in 1871 also in Hyderabad, Sindh. When she married 21-year-old Edmund St Clair Scott in 1890 her family had moved to Indore. Edmund worked with Charlotte's father at the

telegraph station. They had at least two children. Mary Lillian Scott was born in Mandalay, Burma in 1892 and Alroy Desmere St Clair Scott was born in Cuddalore in 1894. Alroy died in Deesa aged nine of malarial fever. Lillian married Emile John Nicholas when she was 28 years old in Lucknow. Emile was a 32 year old train driver. John gave his residence at the time of marriage as Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and Lillian gave her residence as Simla. Advice from grand-daughter, Monica Holt, is that the couple had a least one child, Noreen Clare Nicholas, who was born in 1926 in Ipoh, Malaysia. In 1946 Noreen was already married to Reginald Thomas Sales when she travelled to England with Lorna Mary Sales, her one year old daughter. She travelled back to Bombay the following year but this time she had another two-month-old daughter, Christine Sales, who was born in the Salford district in Lancashire where Reginald's family came from. The couple had at least one other child, Reginald. The family later immigrated to Australia. I have a DNA match with both Reginald and his daughter, Monica (see chapter 23).

Wilermina Desmier

Daughter of George Desmier & Marianna

Wilermina was born and baptised in Hyderabad in 1855 but she died of fever 11 months later.

Joseph Francis Desmier

Son of George Desmier & Marianna

Joseph was born in 1857 in Hyderabad and died of convulsions when nine months old.

Caroline Virginia Desmier

Daughter of George Desmier & Marianna

All that is known about Caroline is that she was born and baptised in Hyderabad in 1861.

Overview of Hyderabad Sindh late 1800'ssource:Hyderabad1800s.jpg, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3822607

George Charles Desmier (1840-1920)
m. 1860 Sarah Angelina Etridge (1840-1905)
Regina Mathilda Desmier (b. 1861)
m. 1883 George Osmond Biggs (b. 1856)
m. 1902 William Blunt (b. 1870)
Millicent Freris Biggs (1890-1968)
m. James David Rogers (b. 1880)
George Osmond Biggs (b. 1894)
Annie Albertina Desmier (1863-1921)
George Thomas Desmier (1865-abt1912)
m. 1898 Stella Maude Clarkson (1876-1910)
Aileen Stella Desmier (abt1898-1926)
m. 1916 Alexander Aloysius Falk (abt1878-abt1924)
Dorothy Marie Desmier (b. 1901)
m. 1922 Louis Jules Fernandez
Ivy Mabel A. Desmier (1902-1992)
m. 1926 Clarence Charles Barrett (b. 1894)
Donald Desmier (1903-1994)
m. 1938 Margaret Rice (1919-2010)
George Edwin C. Desmier (1904-1985)
m. 1938 Marie Louise Anthony (1913-1982)
Alice Regina Desmier (1907-abt1973)
m. 1925 Alfred Norman Cotte (abt1903-1975)
Conrad William Desmier (1908-abt1963)
m. Mupphet Johanes (d. abt1941)
m. Anne Carey
Herbert Stanley Desmier (1910-1994)
m. 1943 Florence B. Christenson (1918-2012)
Alice Leonora Desmier (b. 1867)
m. 1889 William Arthur McLean (b. 1866)
Marie Esther Mclean (abt1897-1982)
m. 1915 Hector Allen Leonard (b. 1895)
Esther Dorothea Desmier (1869-1935)
m. 1891 Tomas Hannibal Aquino (abt1859-bef1901)
Othelia Clothilde Aquino (1892-1962)
m. 1916 Alfred John Gibbs (b. 1877)
Sibyl Aquino (1893-1995)
m. 1921 Anthony George Currie
Laura Esther Aquino (1895-1997)
m. 1921 Victor Herbert Weeks (d. 1970)
Mary Aquino (1899-1935)
m. — Nazareth
Charles Eugene Desmier (1871-1926)
Arthur Herbert Desmier (1872-1958)
m. G. Frauklen-Sawyers
Muriel E Desmier (1904-1992)
m. 1928 Theodore W Tilman
Gladys Gertrude Desmier (1905-1969)
m. Cecil John Rossenrode (1899-1962)
Edna Alicia Desmier (abt1907-1995)
m. 1926 Stanley Berne Brooks (1911-1998)
Noeline Desmier
m. Geoffrey Lawrence Brown
Gwendoline Owen Desmier (b. 1911)
m. Harold James Rossenrode (b. 1901)
Arthur Etrich Desmier (abt1915-1941)
Ernest Edgar Desmier (b. 1874)
Mable Maud Desmier (1876-1948)
m. 1900 Joseph Samuel Kirby (1876-1943)
Vera Beryl Kirby (b. 1901)
m. Ct. Grassi de Frangipani
m. Karl von Ruhland
Mary Hilda Kirby (1905-1982)
m. 1928 Walter Large
m. 1954 John George Potts (b. abt1911)
Marjorie Ellen Kirby (abt1908-abt1927)
Joseph Allen Kirby (1912-1986)
m. 1938 Dorothea Beatrice Paul (1915-1996)
Conrad Etridge Desmier (b. 1877)
m. 1906 Sybil Beryl Loader (1890-1953)
Albert Etridge Desmier (1912-1972)
m. 1939 Marjorie A. Swan-Brown (1914-1990)
Vivian Leslie Desmier (1914-1973)
m. 1940 Iris Cecile Jennings (1915-2006)
William Edmond Desmier (1879-cir1945)
m. 1905 Aileen Helen Myers (abt1884-1906)
m. 1909 Edith Anne Earle (1876-cir1950)
2 Eric William S. Desmier (1910-2000)
m. 1948 Gwendoline M. Joyce (1915-2004)
2 Edith Mary Desmier (1912-2004)
m. —— Jan
m. Harold Ewald (cir1898-1984)
2 Frederick R. Desmier (1914-1930)
2 Terence Earle Desmier (1916-2001)
m. 1941 Alma May Piper (1917-1992)

The families descended from George Charles Desmier and Sarah Angelina Etridge

Main St. Poona from an old postcard

Chapter 9

GEORGE CHARLES DESMIER

CHILDREN WITH FEW DESCENDANTS

George Charles Desmier (1840-1920)
m. 1860 Sarah Angelina Etridge (1840-1905)

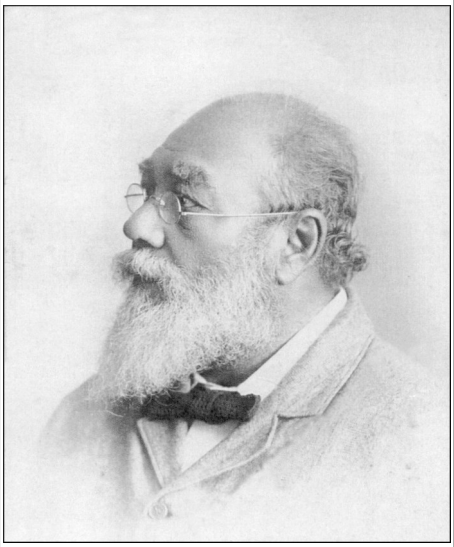
- Regina Mathilda Desmier (b. 1861)
  - m. 1883 George Osmond Biggs (b. 1856)
  - m. 1902 William Blunt (b. 1870)
- Annie Albertina Desmier (1863-1921)
- George Thomas E. Desmier (1865-abt1912)
  - m. 1898 Stella Maude Clarkson (1876-1910)
- Alice Desmier (b. 1867)
  - m. 1889 William Arthur McLean (b. 1866)
- Esther Dorothea Desmier (1869-1935)
  - m. 1891 Tomas Hannibal Aquino (abt1859-bef1901)
- Charles Eugene Desmier (1871-1926)
- Arthur Herbert Desmier (1872-1958)
  - m. Gertrude Frauklen-Sawyers
- Ernest Edgar Desmier (b. 1874)
- Mable Maud Desmier (1876-1948)
  - m. 1900 Joseph Samuel Kirby (1876-1943)
- Conrad Etridge Desmier (b. 1877)
  - m. 1906 Sybil Beryl Loader (1890-1953)
- William Edmond Desmier (1879-cir1945)
  - m. 1905 Aileen Helen Myers (abt1884-1906)
  - m. 1909 Edith Anne Earle (1876-cir1950)

George Charles was the 1st child of George Desmier & Marianna.

There is a lot of information about many of the families descended from George Charles Desmier. In this chapter all his known children are mentioned but if there is significantly more information about a family that is presented in a following chapter. I have also added information about Sarah's family the Etridge's.

Born about 1840, George married Sarah Angelina Etridge in 1860, 10 days after his younger sister, Leonora, was married in the same church in Hyderabad, Sindh. George was a clerk at the time of his marriage but 10 years later he had become a Jailer in Hyderabad. At the time Hyderabad had a population of about 50,000 and was the regional centre. The jail is described by Hunter in The Imperial Gazetteer of India (1886) as ..... *one of the chief public buildings of the area and capable of holding up to 600 convicts*. As Governor of the jail George could afford to keep the family in style. Mable Maud, a daughter, often spoke of the horses and carriages they had and of the grooms they employed to look after them.

From 1891 he is listed as a jailer in Surat up until 1898. It is not clear when he retired but he eventually moved to Poona (now Pune).



George Charles Desmier

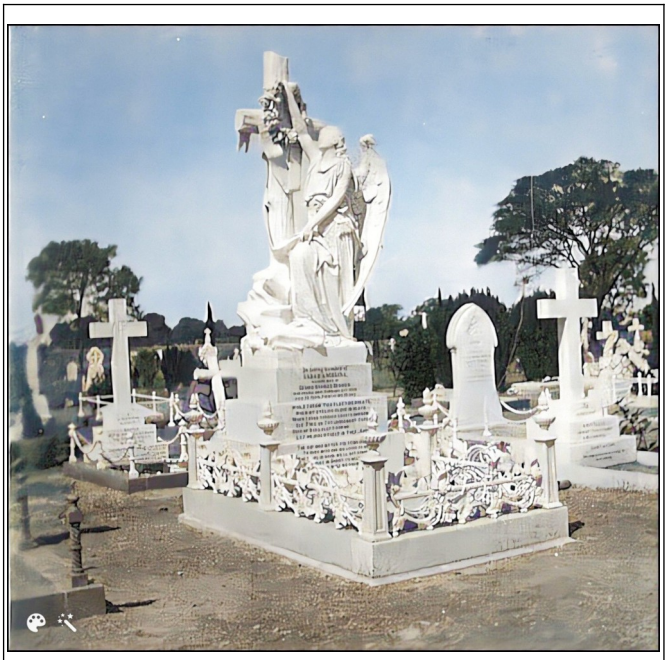
The following memory was passed to me by descendant, Joe von Ruhland (Sibyl & Laura were granddaughters of George):

George Charles was remembered well by his grand-daughters, Sibyl and Laura, as he retired to live with their mother (his 5th child) Esther, in Poona. They were still in their 20's when he died. It seems he was quite a character, very fond of the ladies and used to ride around Poona on a tricycle with an Indian boy following to push him up the steeper bits. When ladies came into view he used to sharply tell the boy to let go so that he would appear to be cycling proudly uphill on his own.

George's wife, Sarah, was the daughter of Thomas Etridge ('Indo -Briton' on his birth extract and recorded as 'Merchant' on his death extract) and his wife Matilda Chatelier. Sarah was born in Tanjore (now Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu). Sarah died in Poona after being married to George for 45 years.

Sibyl and Laura remembered that George was a bit of a farmer type owning animals and land. He was also a good horseman and rifleman but he had an injured hand due to a gunshot wound. This happened when he was climbing down from a tree and a branch caught on one of the hammers of the shotgun which went off and some of the shot hit his forearm.

George Charles Desmier and Sarah
colourised 2024



Grave of Sarah Angelina Desmier (née Etridge)
St. Sepulche's cemetery ,Poona
colourised 2024

Hyderabad Jail where George Charles Desmier was the Governor
photo taken 2013 © 2019 The Express Tribune Pakistan

Hyderabad, Sindh

Hyderabad was colonised by the East India Company in 1843 after a battle with the ruling Taipurs. The EIC continued the trade of cloth, Indigo dye and other goods that had been established along the Indus river down to the port of Karachi where the East India Company had their main regional headquarters.

The area is very hot and arid. The old photo (page 53) shows wind catchers on the roofs of buildings that were used to direct cooling breezes down into the houses during the summer.

The following is a quote about the Hyderabad jail that George Charles Desmier was in charge of:

The prison, constructed in 1851 AD, had a capacity of 600 prisoners. At that time it had facilities of a well-maintained hospital and a dispensary as well. Prisoners were mostly kept employed in various works like manufacturing carpets, table-cloths, towels, trousers, sheeting cloths, camel kits, mats, chairs, boots, earthen piping, bricks and chat ties. they were taught these skills during their stay in prison. The same prison is now overcrowded lacking any kind of facilities and notoriously labelled as a 'drug-den'

Source: Talpur, Mir Atta Muhammad (2007). The Vanishing Glory of Hyderabad (Sindh, Pakistan) (PDF). Web Journal on Cultural Patrimony. University of Naples. ISSN 1827-8868.

The Etridge family

Sarah Angelina Etridge was the wife of George Charles Desmier and grand-daughter of Henry Etridge

Henry Etridge

The earliest occurrence of the Etridge name that I have found is Henry Etridge. In 1793 at St Mary's Church, Fort St George, Henry married Clarinda. Clarinda was recorded as '*a native of this country and maid servant to Mrs Garrow*'. Henry's occupation was written as '*Gunner in Captain Tanner's Company, 2nd Battalion, Coast Artillery (in the Band of Musicians)*'. The 2nd Battalion was part of the Madras Regiment raised by the East India Company. As far as I can determine, musicians in the army were mainly drummers and some fifers (a fife was a type of flute). I have found more information against his name but I have been unable to trace the reference and confirm it for myself. I believe that it is worth replicating here in case others are able to follow it up:

Service Record from Muster Rolls and Casualty Returns relating to Henry Etridge (Vol.12, 1800 to 1801 and Casualties 1802. Ref L/MIL/11/120) (Madras Muster Rolls and Casualty Returns Vol. 5, 1778 to 1780. Ref: L/MIL/11/113). Extract from The Fort George Register of European Troops and the Register of The Honorable East India Company's European Invalids and Pensioners on the Coast of Coramandel as they stood on 31 Dec 1800.

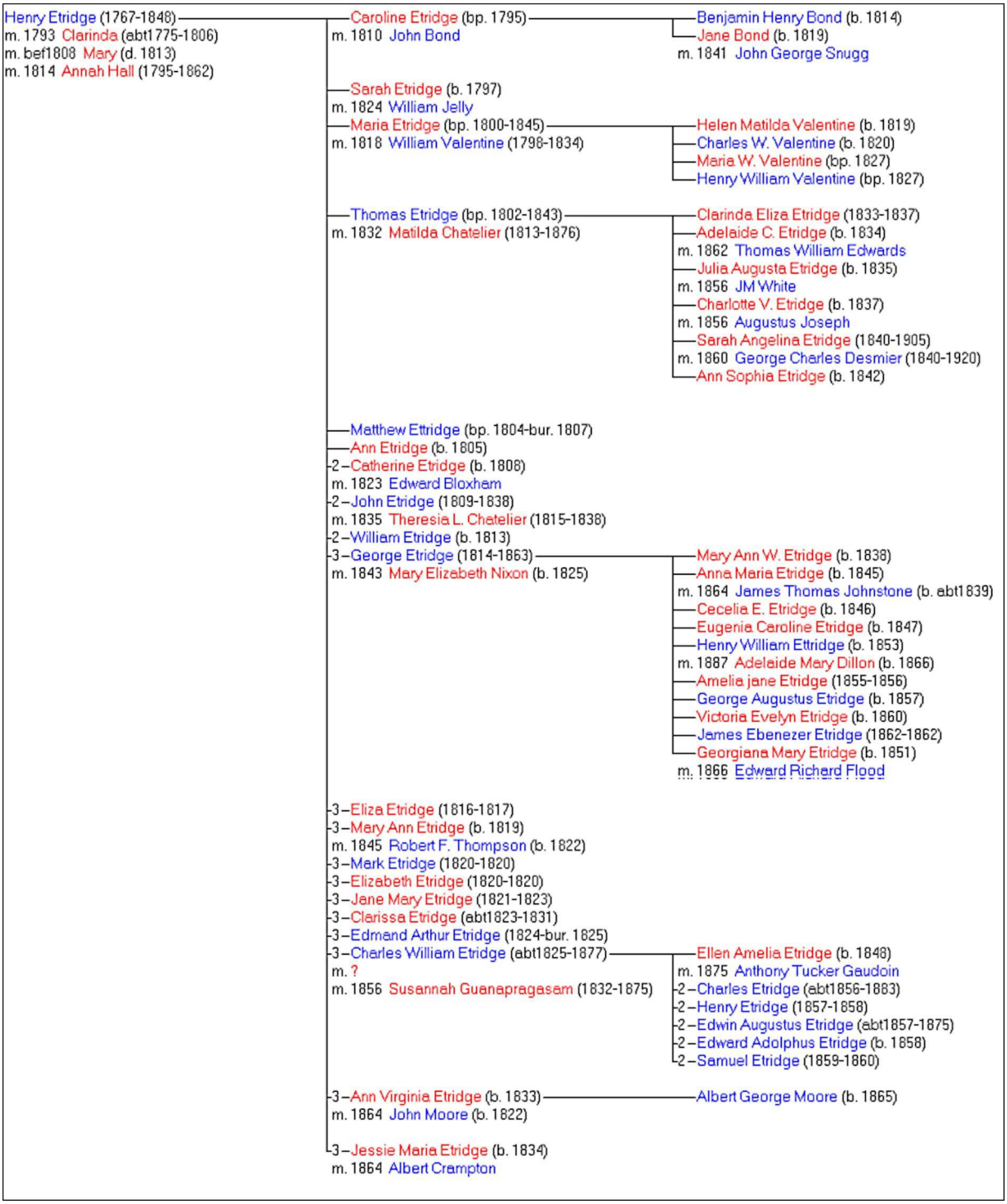
No:170 Etridge, Henry Artillery Corps Rank: Fifer Ship Arrived on: "True Briton" Nov 1779 Pensioned 1880

"Fort George" should be Fort St. George and the pensioned date should be 1780 not 1880.

I have found seven baptisms of children where the parents are recorded as Henry and Clarinda. Clarinda died in 1806. From 1808 to 1813 there are a further four children with Henry named as the father and Mary as the mother and his wife, however, I have found no record of their marriage. Mary is recorded as having died in 1813. In early 1814 Henry married Annah Hall in Madras. Between 1814 and 1834 Anna(h) gave birth to at least 11 children. All but the two youngest of these children were baptised in Trichonopoly and Henry's occupation was recorded as a merchant. By the time of the last child's birth Henry is estimated to have been about 67 years old (based on his age stated on the burial extract). Of Annah's 11 children, only five survived beyond their teenage years.

A newspaper notice in the Government Gazette (25 Oct. 1827) states that a ladies milliner from Madras was going to supply her range to Mr Etridge of Trichinopoly and that he was going to charge 12% over her Madras price to cover transport and commission. This indicates that ladies hat-wear was part of his range of goods.

Henry died in 1848 when he was 81 years old of consumption (tuberculosis) and was buried in Madras. Anna died in 1862 in Madras of atrophy when she was 69 years old. On her death return she is recorded as being the widow of Henry Etridge, Coach Builder.


Henry Etridge (1767-1848)
m. 1793 Clarinda (abt1775-1806)
m. bef1808 Mary (d. 1813)
m. 1814 Annah Hall (1795-1862)
Caroline Etridge (bp. 1795)
m. 1810 John Bond
Benjamin Henry Bond (b. 1814)
Jane Bond (b. 1819)
m. 1841 John George Snugg
Sarah Etridge (b. 1797)
m. 1824 William Jelly
Maria Etridge (bp. 1800-1845)
m. 1818 William Valentine (1798-1834)
Helen Matilda Valentine (b. 1819)
Charles W. Valentine (b. 1820)
Maria W. Valentine (bp. 1827)
Henry William Valentine (bp. 1827)
Thomas Etridge (bp. 1802-1843)
m. 1832 Matilda Chatelier (1813-1876)
Clarinda Eliza Etridge (1833-1837)
Adelaide C. Etridge (b. 1834)
m. 1862 Thomas William Edwards
Julia Augusta Etridge (b. 1835)
m. 1856 JM White
Charlotte V. Etridge (b. 1837)
m. 1856 Augustus Joseph
Sarah Angelina Etridge (1840-1905)
m. 1860 George Charles Desmier (1840-1920)
Ann Sophia Etridge (b. 1842)
Matthew Etridge (bp. 1804-bur. 1807)
Ann Etridge (b. 1805)
2 Catherine Etridge (b. 1808)
m. 1823 Edward Bloxham
2 John Etridge (1809-1838)
m. 1835 Theresia L. Chatelier (1815-1838)
2 William Etridge (b. 1813)
3 George Etridge (1814-1863)
m. 1843 Mary Elizabeth Nixon (b. 1825)
Mary Ann W. Etridge (b. 1838)
Anna Maria Etridge (b. 1845)
m. 1864 James Thomas Johnstone (b. abt1839)
Cecelia E. Etridge (b. 1846)
Eugenia Caroline Etridge (b. 1847)
Henry William Ettridge (b. 1853)
m. 1887 Adelaide Mary Dillon (b. 1866)
Amelia jane Etridge (1855-1856)
George Augustus Etridge (b. 1857)
Victoria Evelyn Etridge (b. 1860)
James Ebenezer Etridge (1862-1862)
Georgiana Mary Etridge (b. 1851)
m. 1866 Edward Richard Flood
3 Eliza Etridge (1816-1817)
3 Mary Ann Etridge (b. 1819)
m. 1845 Robert F. Thompson (b. 1822)
3 Mark Etridge (1820-1820)
3 Elizabeth Etridge (1820-1820)
3 Jane Mary Etridge (1821-1823)
3 Clarissa Etridge (abt1823-1831)
3 Edmand Arthur Etridge (1824-bur. 1825)
3 Charles William Etridge (abt1825-1877)
m. ?
m. 1856 Susannah Guanapragasam (1832-1875)
Ellen Amelia Etridge (b. 1848)
m. 1875 Anthony Tucker Gaudoin
2 Charles Etridge (abt1856-1883)
2 Henry Etridge (1857-1858)
2 Edwin Augustus Etridge (abt1857-1875)
2 Edward Adolphus Etridge (b. 1858)
2 Samuel Etridge (1859-1860)
3 Ann Virginia Etridge (b. 1833)
m. 1864 John Moore (b. 1822)
Albert George Moore (b. 1865)
3 Jessie Maria Etridge (b. 1834)
m. 1864 Albert Crampton

The Etridge family and their connection to George Charles Desmier

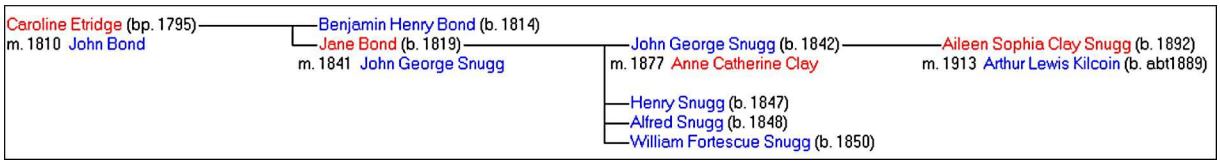
It is strange that I have not found any children named after Henry. If there was one, but his birth or marriage extract has not survived and if he married a girl Ann or Anna then some of these last children could possibly be attributed to him and his wife rather than the older Henry.

In the following sections I have only written about those descendants of Henry and his wives for whom I have more information than what I have included in the descendant chart above. There is considerable potential to explore other branches of his family using the online databases (I have mainly focussed on the families relevant to the Desmier line). It should be realised that, although there is more to discover, there were many records that were not copied and sent back to England (estimated by others to be a further 25%).

Caroline Etridge

1st daughter of Henry & Clarinda Etridge

Caroline was described as a native when she married John Bond in 1810 in St Mary's church Fort St George. She was 15 years old. Baptism extracts have only been found for two children. Benjamin Henry Bond, baptised 1814 and Jane Bond baptised 1819. On Jane's baptism record her father, John's occupation was given as musical instrument maker. Jane married John George Snugg in 1841. No occupation for her husband was recorded. Between 1842 and 1850 they had four boys.


Caroline Etridge (bp. 1795)
m. 1810 John Bond
Benjamin Henry Bond (b. 1814)
Jane Bond (b. 1819)
m. 1841 John George Snugg
John George Snugg (b. 1842)
m. 1877 Anne Catherine Clay
Aileen Sophia Clay Snugg (b. 1892)
m. 1913 Arthur Lewis Kilcoin (b. abt1889)
Henry Snugg (b. 1847)
Alfred Snugg (b. 1848)
William Fortescue Snugg (b. 1850)

I have a DNA link back to Henry and Clarinda through their oldest son John whose daughter married into the Kilcoin family (See chapter 23).

Sarah Etridge

2nd daughter of Henry & Clarinda Etridge

Sarah married William Jelly in 1824 in Trichinopoly when she was 27 years old. Brother Thomas and step-mother Anna were witnesses of the marriage. No records for children have been sought.

Maria Etridge

3rd daughter of Henry & Clarinda Etridge

When Maria was 18 years old she married, with the consent of her parents, William Valentine a young merchant of Trichonopoly. William died in 1834 when he was 36 years old. Maria (Mary) died of Cholera in 1845. Between 1819 and 1927 they are known to have had at least four children: Helen Charles, Maria and Henry.

Thomas Etridge

1st son of Henry & Clarinda Etridge, father of Sarah Angelina Etridge, the wife of George Charles Desmier

Thomas was a bachelor and at least 30 years old when he married 19-year-old Matilda Chatelier in Tanjore in 1832. No occupation was recorded for him but when their first child, Clarinda named after his mother, was born the following year (also in Tanjore) he was recorded as a shopkeeper. Their second child, Adelaide, was baptised in Trichonopoly but the following four children were all baptised in Tanjore. Thomas's occupation on the baptism's of his children was recorded in 1837 as a merchant and in 1842 as a schoolmaster. He died in 1843 and was buried in Ootacamund. His age was given on the death extract as 38 which understates it by at least a couple of years.

Information about Thomas's children follow in a later section.

Matthew Etridge

2nd son of Henry & Clarinda Etridge

Matthew was baptised in 1804 and died in 1807.

Ann Etridge

4th daughter of Henry & Clarinda Etridge

Ann was born and baptised in 1805. No more information about her has been found. She was Clarinda's last child, Clarinda died 10 months after the birth of Ann.

Catherine Etridge

1st daughter of Henry & Mary Etridge

Born in 1808, Mary was named as her mother and the wife of Henry. Catherine (Katharine) was 15 years old when she married Edward Bloxham, bachelor and a Quarter Master Sergeant with the 7th Regiment, Light Cavalry. They were married by a missionary in Trichonopoly.

John Etridge

1st son of Henry & Mary Etridge

John was born and baptised in 1809. In 1835 he married Theresia Leonora Chatelier. Theresia was the younger sister of Matilda Chatelier who married John's half brother, Thomas. It is recorded on the marriage record that he was a senior assistant apothecary with the 6th regiment light cavalry stationed in Trichonopoly. John is recorded as being buried less than 3 years later in Bangalore. He was still attached to the 6th regiment. No children have been found that could be attributed to their marriage.

William Etridge

2nd son of Henry & Mary Etridge

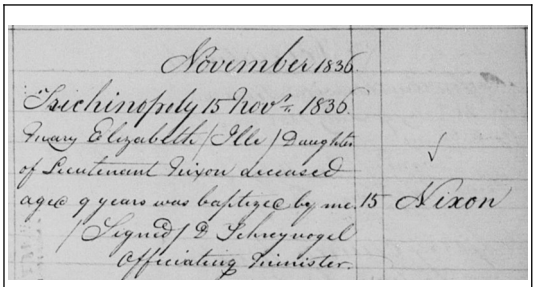
William was born and baptised in 1813. No more information has been found. Mary died 12 days after the birth of William.

In 1814 Henry married Ann(ah) Hall. Ann, born in Cuddalore, was a daughter of Jonathon Hall, an invalided soldier, and his wife Mariana. Between 1814 and 1834 Ann gave birth to at least eleven children. It is known that at least five of the children, Eliza, twins Mark and Elizabeth, Jane and Edmand did not survive infancy and Clarissa died when she was eight years old. So far I have only found descendants for George, Charles and Ann but the search has not been exhaustive.

George Etridge

1st son of Henry & Anna Etridge

George was born 12 months after Henry and Anna's marriage. When he married Mary Elizabeth Nixon in Vepery (1843) he was recorded as a merchant living in Vepery (now a suburb of Madras). The records are confusing with respect to Mary. The marriage extract records her age as 18 (suggesting a birth of about 1825) and George's as 28. There is a baptism in Trichonopoly for a Mary Elizabeth Nixon in 1836 who was 9 years old when baptised. Her father was noted to be a deceased lieutenant


November 1836.
Trichinopoly 15 Nov.r 1836
Mary Elizabeth Nix 2 daughter
of Lieutenant Nixon deceased
aged 9 years was baptized by me 15 Nixon
Signed C. Schreyvogel
Officiating Minister.

Baptism of Mary Elizabeth Nixon
Source FindMyPast

and it looks like the record says that she was illegitimate. Given the approximate nature of the ages in these records they are likely to refer to the same person.

More confusing is a baptism extract in 1838 of a child, Mary Ann Wilhelmina Etridge, to George and Mary Ann Etridge in Vepery where George's occupation is recorded as a writer in the Gun Carriage factory. I suspect that in fact the date should read 1848 not 1838. My reasons to believe this are that; the next birth to the couple is in 1845; there is a gap in births of children from 1847 to 1853; his careers recorded on the baptisms of his children make more sense if the change in date is made. He seems to have first become a draughtsman at the gun carriage manufactory by the baptism of Anna Maria, then a writer, then a head writer and at his death in 1863 he was recorded as having been the manager of the manufactory. I have, however, left the recorded date in the chart so that the record can be found more easily in the future if required.

Over their 49 years of marriage they had at least 10 children but I have not researched their descendants any further.

Charles William Etridge

2nd surviving son of Henry & Anna Etridge

Charles was baptised in Trichonopoly in 1826. In 1848 a baptism was recorded for an illegitimate daughter Ellen Amelia Etridge. At that time Charles was a cabinetmaker living in Trichonopoly. In 1875 Ellen married Anthony Tucker Gaudoin in Vepery (transcript from FamilySearch only).

In 1856 Charles married Susannah Guanapragasam in Trichonopoly. He was recorded as a 31-year old bachelor and the manager of the pension office. Susannah was recorded as a spinster. They appear to have had at least five children Charles, Henry, Edwin Augustus, Edwin Adolphus and Samuel but the only occasion where Susannah's name has been found is for the death of 18-year-old Edwin who died in 1875 of diabetes. On Edward's baptism extract in 1862 (but born 1858) Charles' occupation is recorded as a photographer. Charles was 45 years old when he died of a fever. At the time he was assistant superintendant for relief works at Poodapet, a Madras suburb.

Ann Virginia Etridge

10th child of Henry & Anna Etridge

Ann married widower John Moore in Trichonopoly,1864. They had at least one child Albert.

Jesse Maria Etridge

11th child of Henry & Anna Etridge

Jesse married 50-year old widower and merchant Albert Crampton in Vepery, 1864.

The Chatelier Family

Pierre Chatillé (Chatelier) is the great-grandfather of Sarah Angelina Etridge, the wife of George Charles Desmier

The Chatelier family is quite extensive and I have not researched them much beyond their relevance to the Desmier line.

Pierre Chatillé (presumed alternative spelling to Chatelier) is named as the father of Jean Francois Chatelier. He was recorded on the baptism of his son Jean, as being a native of Paris, France. His wife Antoinette Tomagêre was recorded as a native of Pondicherry. No other children of Pierre and Atoinette have been found. There is a DNA match between this family through Annette Margaret Rossett and the marriage between Thomas Etridge and Jean Francois Chatelier (see chapter 23).

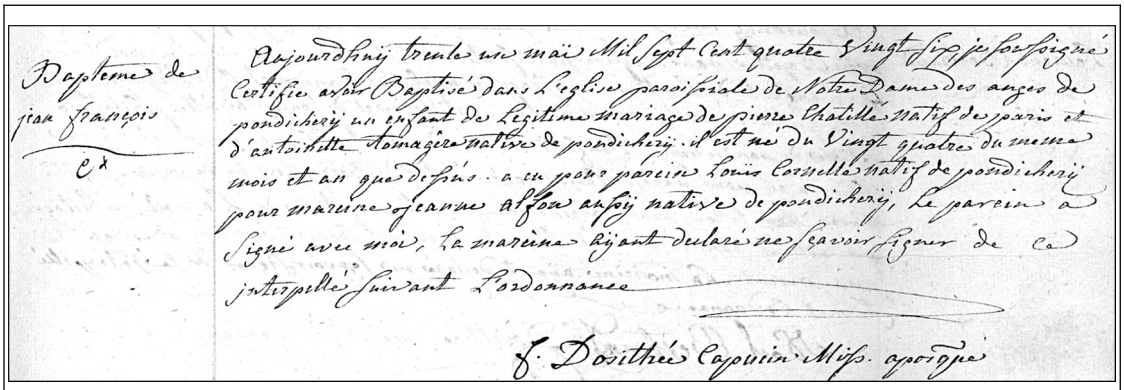
Pierre C. (Chatille)
m. bef1786 Antoinette Tomagere

Jean Francois Chatelier (1786-1846)
m. 1807 Theresia Pereira (abt1786-1873)

- Adolphus Chatelier (1808-1866)
  - m. 1832 Mary Taylor
  - m. 1857 Charlotte D'Santos
- Christopher Chatelier (bp. 1809-1878)
  - m. 1833 Nancy Pagel
- Oliver Chatelier (1810-1857)
- Eugene Chatelier (1812-1842)
  - m. 1835 Susan Casey (b. 1820)
- Matilda Chatelier (1813-1876)
  - m. 1832 Thomas Etridge (bp. 1802-1843)
- Charlotte Chatelier (bp. 1814)
  - m. 1837 John Blacker
- Theresia L. Chatelier (1815-1838)
  - m. 1835 John Etridge (1809-1838)
- Joseph Chatelier (1816-1852)
  - m. 1841 Elizabeth Snell (d. bef1850)
- Maria Louisa Chatelier (1817-1818)
- Caroline E. Chatelier (b. 1818)
- Helena Chatelier (1820-1820)

Jean Francois Chatelier

Maternal grandfather of Sarah Angelina Etridge



Baptisme de jean françois

Aujourdhuij trente un mai Mil Sept Cent quatre Vingt Sixje soussigné Certifie avoir Baptisé dans L'eglise paroissiale de Notre Dame des anges de pondicherij un enfant de Legitime mariage de pierre Chatille natif de paris et d'antoinette Tomagère native de pondicherij. il est né du Vingt quatre du meme mois et an que dessus. a eu pour parein Louis Cornelle natif de pondicherij pour mareine jeanne alfon anfoij native de pondicherij, Le parein a Signé avec moi, la mareine ayant declaré ne scavoir signer de ce interpellée suivant L'ordonnance

F. Dosithée Capucin Miss. apostoque

Baptism record of Jean Francois Chatelier
Source Archive Nationale d'Outre Mer (ANOM) baptisms Inde Pondichery 1786

My best attempt at a translation of the baptism record follows:

Baptism of Jean Francois

Today 30 May 1786 I the undersigned certified to have baptised in the parish church of Notre Dames Des Anges Pondichery a child of the legitimate marriage of Pierre Chatillé native of Paris and of Antoinette Tomagêre native of Pondichery. He is born of 24 of the same month and on the opposite??? and for godfather Louis Cornelle native of Pondichery and for godmother Jeane xxx xxx native of *Pondichery The godfather and the godmother signed with me. The godmother had declared not able to sign her name following the ordinance J Doritheé capuchin xxx xxx*

Other than the fact that Jean Francois was baptised in Pondicherry I have found nothing more about him until his marriage. In 1807 he married widow There(i)sia Periera in Tanjore. Jean was recorded as being a bachelor and a writer and Theresia was noted as being a *native widow of Tranquebar* on the marriage extract. Writer was the title given to people who did work of a clerical nature. Theresia's burial return shows that she died in 1873 aged 83 suggesting a birthdate of 1790 therefore she was about the same age as Jean Francois. The information on the baptism of their (at least) 11 children and on his tomb inscription indicate that Jean was employed as a writer and subsequently office manager in the Residents Office in Tanjore. The Resident represented the East India Company to the Raja of the princely kingdom. The kingdom was absorbed under the rule of the East India Company in 1855 when the last ruler died without an heir.

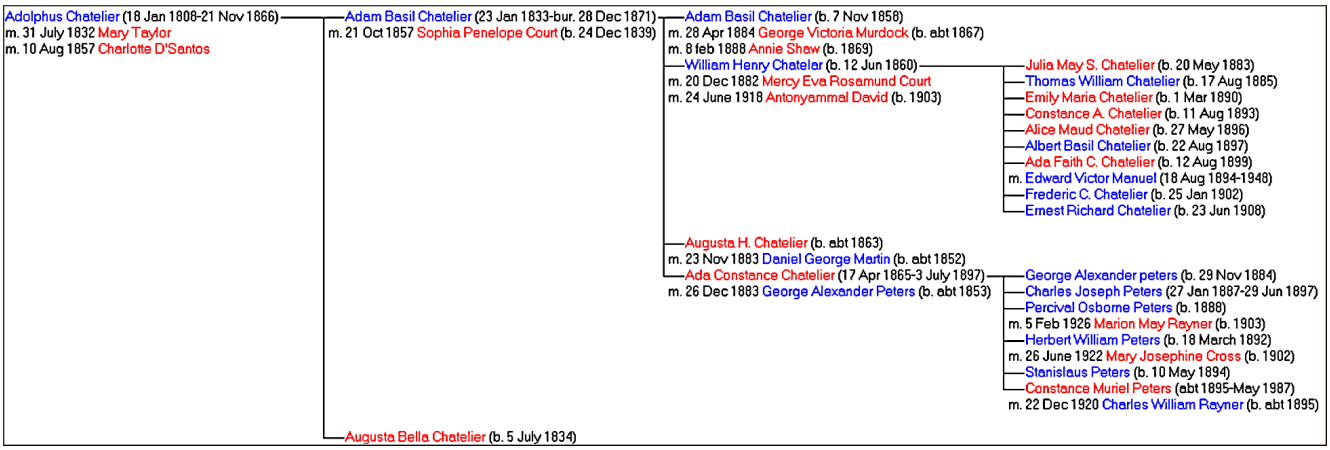
Year.	Month and date.	Inscription.
		Roman Catholic Cemetery belonging to the Goanese Church at Tanjore.
1846	April 29th ...	**Chatelier.** Sacred to the memory of John Francis Chatelier, who died in the 60th year of his age, on the 29th April 1846, being manager in the Resident's office at this station for a period of 41 years.
		NOTE.—There is also a tomb, probably of an old date, as the inscription thereon is wholly illegible, having been inscribed on chunam.

List of European Tombs in the Tanjore District, page 33 published 1914
Accessed using www.archive.org 2024

The note in the entry copied above refers to chunam which is highly polished form of limestone cement.

Adolphus Chatelier

1st child of Jean Francois Chatelier and Theresia Pereira


Adolphus Chatelier (18 Jan 1808-21 Nov 1866)
m. 31 July 1832 Mary Taylor
m. 10 Aug 1857 Charlotte D'Santos
Adam Basil Chatelier (23 Jan 1833-bur. 28 Dec 1871)
m. 21 Oct 1857 Sophia Penelope Court (b. 24 Dec 1839)
Augusta Bella Chatelier (b. 5 July 1834)
Adam Basil Chatelier (b. 7 Nov 1858)
m. 28 Apr 1884 George Victoria Murdock (b. abt 1867)
m. 8 feb 1888 Annie Shaw (b. 1869)
William Henry Chatelar (b. 12 Jun 1860)
m. 20 Dec 1882 Mercy Eva Rosamund Court
m. 24 June 1918 Antonyammal David (b. 1903)
Julia May S. Chatelier (b. 20 May 1883)
Thomas William Chatelier (b. 17 Aug 1885)
Emily Maria Chatelier (b. 1 Mar 1890)
Constance A. Chatelier (b. 11 Aug 1893)
Alice Maud Chatelier (b. 27 May 1896)
Albert Basil Chatelier (b. 22 Aug 1897)
Ada Faith C. Chatelier (b. 12 Aug 1899)
m. Edward Victor Manuel (18 Aug 1894-1948)
Frederic C. Chatelier (b. 25 Jan 1902)
Ernest Richard Chatelier (b. 23 Jun 1908)
Augusta H. Chatelier (b. abt 1863)
m. 23 Nov 1883 Daniel George Martin (b. abt 1852)
Ada Constance Chatelier (17 Apr 1865-3 July 1897)
m. 26 Dec 1883 George Alexander Peters (b. abt 1853)
George Alexander peters (b. 29 Nov 1884)
Charles Joseph Peters (27 Jan 1887-29 Jun 1897)
Percival Osborne Peters (b. 1888)
m. 5 Feb 1926 Marion May Rayner (b. 1903)
Herbert William Peters (b. 18 March 1892)
m. 26 June 1922 Mary Josephine Cross (b. 1902)
Stanislaus Peters (b. 10 May 1894)
Constance Muriel Peters (abt 1895-May 1987)
m. 22 Dec 1920 Charles William Rayner (b. abt 1895)

Adolphus was baptised shorly after his birth in Tanjore. Jean was recorded as ‘John” in the baptism extract. He was a writer in Tanjore when he married widow Mary Taylor who was described as an Indo-Briton in the extract. Records have only been found for two children, Adam Basil and Augusta Bella born shortly after their marriage but I have not been able to find a death extract for Mary. Adolphus.I have also not been able to find any further information about Augusta. When Adolphus married widow Charlotte De Santos in 1857 he was nearly 50 years old and was described as a widower. His occupation was given as head writer at the District Engineer’s office in Salem, about 200km. North-West of Tanjore.

Adam Basil Chatelier

1st child of Adolphus Chatelier and Mary Taylor

Adam was about 23 when he married Sophia Penelope Court who was just under 18 years old (but was stated to be of full age on the marriage extract). The marriage took place in Blacktown, Madras where Sophia’s father was a clerk. Sophia had also been baptised in Blacktown. They went on to have 4 children. Adam seemed to spend most of his career in the police force and was an inspector of the Mofusil (regional) police. He died when he was 42 years old in Coimbatore and is buried at the Roman Catholic mission cemetery there. Some information on Adam and Sophia’s children follows.

Adam Basil Chatelier

Ist child of Adam and Sophia

A marriage record exists for Adam to 17 year old George Victoria Murdock at Coonoor in the Nilgiri Hils in 1884. No children from the marriage has been found and neither has a death extract for his wife,however, in 1888 he was recorded as a widower on a marriage at the Catholic cathedral in Madras. Annie Shaw, his second wife, was a 19 year old from Madras and Adam, then 29, was recorded as a Sub-Registrar in Government service. No records of children have been found. Adam died at the age of 40, in Coimbatore.

William Henry Chatelier

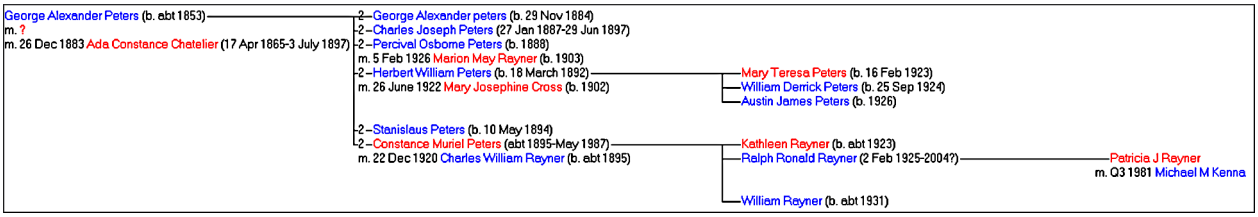
2nd child of Adam and Sophia

In 1882 22-year-old William married his cousin Mercy Eva Rosamund Court who was four years his Junior. Both were residents of Blacktown, Madras where William was a telegraphist for the Madras railway. He was to continue working in telegraphy and by 1917 had risen to the rank of telegraph inspector when the two last of their nine recorded children were baptised together. No record of death has been found for Mercy but as their last child was born in 1908 it could have happened any time after that date. There is a DNA match between my family and “Daxman22” through Adolphus Chatelier (see chapter 23).

In 1918 he was recorded as a 58-year old retired, widowed pensioner in Bangalore when he married 15 year old Antonyammal David. No further information has been found for William.

Ada Constance Chatelier

4th child of Adam and Sophia

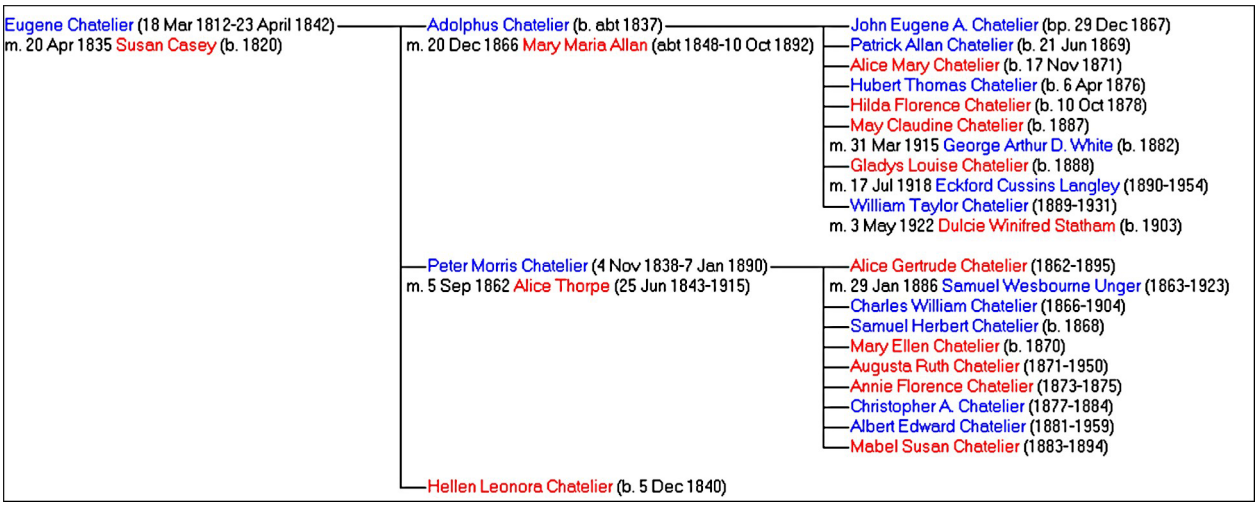

George Alexander Peters (b. abt 1853)
m. ?
m. 26 Dec 1883 Ada Constance Chatelier (17 Apr 1865-3 July 1897)
2 George Alexander peters (b. 29 Nov 1884)
2 Charles Joseph Peters (27 Jan 1887-29 Jun 1897)
2 Percival Osborne Peters (b. 1888)
m. 5 Feb 1926 Marion May Rayner (b. 1903)
2 Herbert William Peters (b. 18 March 1892)
m. 26 June 1922 Mary Josephine Cross (b. 1902)
Mary Teresa Peters (b. 16 Feb 1923)
William Derrick Peters (b. 25 Sep 1924)
Austin James Peters (b. 1926)
2 Stanislaus Peters (b. 10 May 1894)
2 Constance Muriel Peters (abt 1895-May 1987)
m. 22 Dec 1920 Charles William Rayner (b. abt 1895)
Kathleen Rayner (b. abt 1923)
Ralph Ronald Rayner (2 Feb 1925-2004?)
Patricia J Rayner
m. Q3 1981 Michael M Kenna
William Rayner (b. abt 1931)

The last recorded child of Adam and Sophia, Ada, was baptised in the Emmanuel Chapel in Blacktown, Madras. Her father was then the Inspector of the Mofusil Police at the time living in Vepery, now a Madras suburb. She married widower, George Alexander Peters, when she was an eighteen year old. George was 30 years old and at the time was a postmaster at Salem. A month earlier her elder sister, Alexandria, was married at Coimbatore (also in Tamil Nadu state) to Daniel George Martin. Ada and George had had six children between 1883 and her death in 1897. Ada was buried in Secunderbad during a cholera epidemic. Family advice is that he returned to England after the death of Ada. I have a DNA match to this family line through the Rayner (Kenna) family.

Christopher Chatelier

2nd child of Jean Francois Chatelier and Theresia Pereira

Christopher married Nancy Pagel at Pondicherry in 1833, Chistopher was a writer and presumed to be about 23 years old. No reocord of any children has been found.

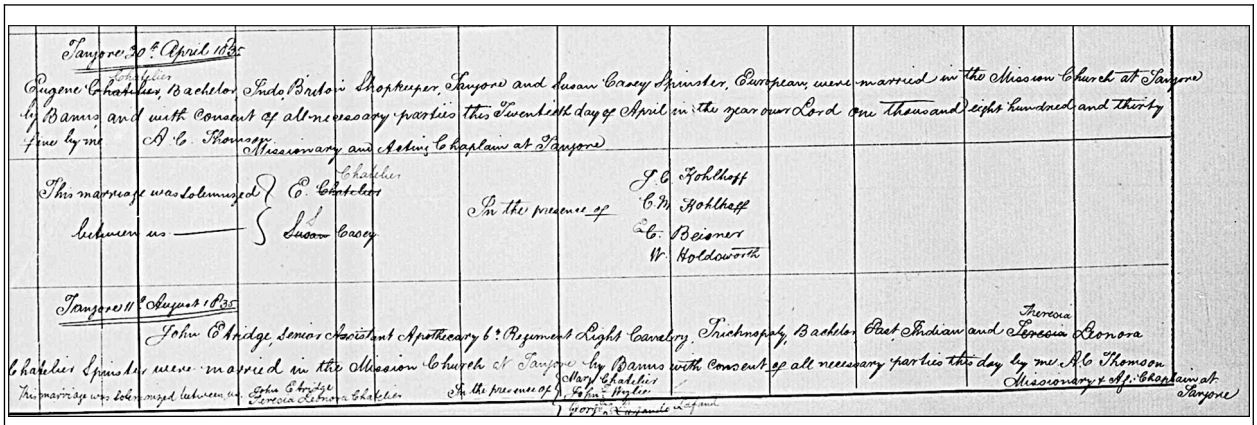

Eugene Chatelier (18 Mar 1812-23 April 1842)
m. 20 Apr 1835 Susan Casey (b. 1820)
Adolphus Chatelier (b. abt 1837)
m. 20 Dec 1866 Mary Maria Allan (abt 1848-10 Oct 1892)
John Eugene A. Chatelier (bp. 29 Dec 1867)
Patrick Allan Chatelier (b. 21 Jun 1869)
Alice Mary Chatelier (b. 17 Nov 1871)
Hubert Thomas Chatelier (b. 6 Apr 1876)
Hilda Florence Chatelier (b. 10 Oct 1878)
May Claudine Chatelier (b. 1887)
m. 31 Mar 1915 George Arthur D. White (b. 1882)
Gladys Louise Chatelier (b. 1888)
m. 17 Jul 1918 Eckford Cussins Langley (1890-1954)
William Taylor Chatelier (1889-1931)
m. 3 May 1922 Dulcie Winifred Statham (b. 1903)
Peter Morris Chatelier (4 Nov 1838-7 Jan 1890)
m. 5 Sep 1862 Alice Thorpe (25 Jun 1843-1915)
Alice Gertrude Chatelier (1862-1895)
m. 29 Jan 1886 Samuel Wesbourne Unger (1863-1923)
Charles William Chatelier (1866-1904)
Samuel Herbert Chatelier (b. 1868)
Mary Ellen Chatelier (b. 1870)
Augusta Ruth Chatelier (1871-1950)
Annie Florence Chatelier (1873-1875)
Christopher A. Chatelier (1877-1884)
Albert Edward Chatelier (1881-1959)
Mabel Susan Chatelier (1883-1894)
Hellen Leonora Chatelier (b. 5 Dec 1840)

Eugene Chatelier

4th child of Jean Francois Chatelier and Theresia Pereira

Eugene was born in Tanjore in 1812 but was found dead on the road to Bangalore from Tanjore when he was 30 years old.

In 1835 he married 15 year old Susan Casey at the mission church in Tanjore but when Eugene died the youngest of his three children was less than 2 years old. He was variously described as a merchant or a shopkeeper. I have several DNA matches with this family through Peter Morris Chatelier (Jean Carol James and Michael Godfrey James); with Gary Wooten; with Kim Macdonald and with Catherine Murray Wilson Chatelier See chapter 23.



Tanjore, 30th April 1835

Eugene Chatellier, Bachelor, Indo Britain Shopkeeper, Tanjore and Susan Casey, Spinster, European, were married in the Mission Church at Tanjore by Banns and with Consent of all necessary parties this Twenty-eighth day of April in the year our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty five by me A. C. Thomson Missionary and Acting Chaplain at Tanjore

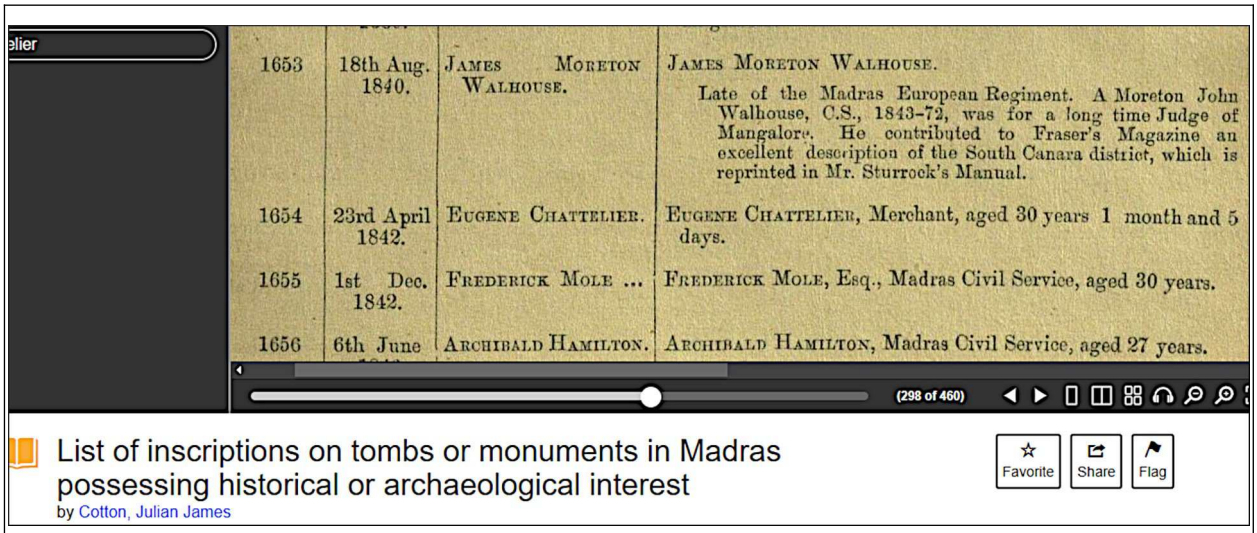
This marriage was solemnized between us — E. Chatellier, Susan Casey — In the presence of J. C. Fohlhoff, C. M. Fohlhoff, C. Beisner, W. Holdsworth

Tanjore 11th August 1835

John Etridge, Senior Assistant Apothecary 6th Regiment Light Cavalry, Trichinopoly, Bachelor, East Indian and Theresia Leonora Chatelier Spinster, were married in the Mission Church at Tanjore by Banns with Consent of all necessary parties this day by me A. C. Thomson Missionary & Actg. Chaplain at Tanjore

This marriage was solemnized between us — John Etridge, Theresia Leonora Chatelier — In the presence of — Mary Chatelier, [illegible]

Marriage extracts at Tanjore 1835 John Etridge and Theresia Leonora Chatelier and Eugene Chatelier and Susan Casey source: Find my Past



1653	18th Aug. 1840.	James Moreton Walhouse.	James Moreton Walhouse. Late of the Madras European Regiment. A Moreton John Walhouse, C.S., 1843-72, was for a long time Judge of Mangalore. He contributed to Fraser's Magazine an excellent description of the South Canara district, which is reprinted in Mr. Sturrock's Manual.
1654	23rd April 1842.	Eugene Chattelier.	Eugene Chattelier, Merchant, aged 30 years 1 month and 5 days.
1655	1st Dec. 1842.	Frederick Mole ...	Frederick Mole, Esq., Madras Civil Service, aged 30 years.
1656	6th June	Archibald Hamilton.	Archibald Hamilton, Madras Civil Service, aged 27 years.

(298 of 460)

List of inscriptions on tombs or monuments in Madras possessing historical or archaeological interest

by Cotton, Julian James

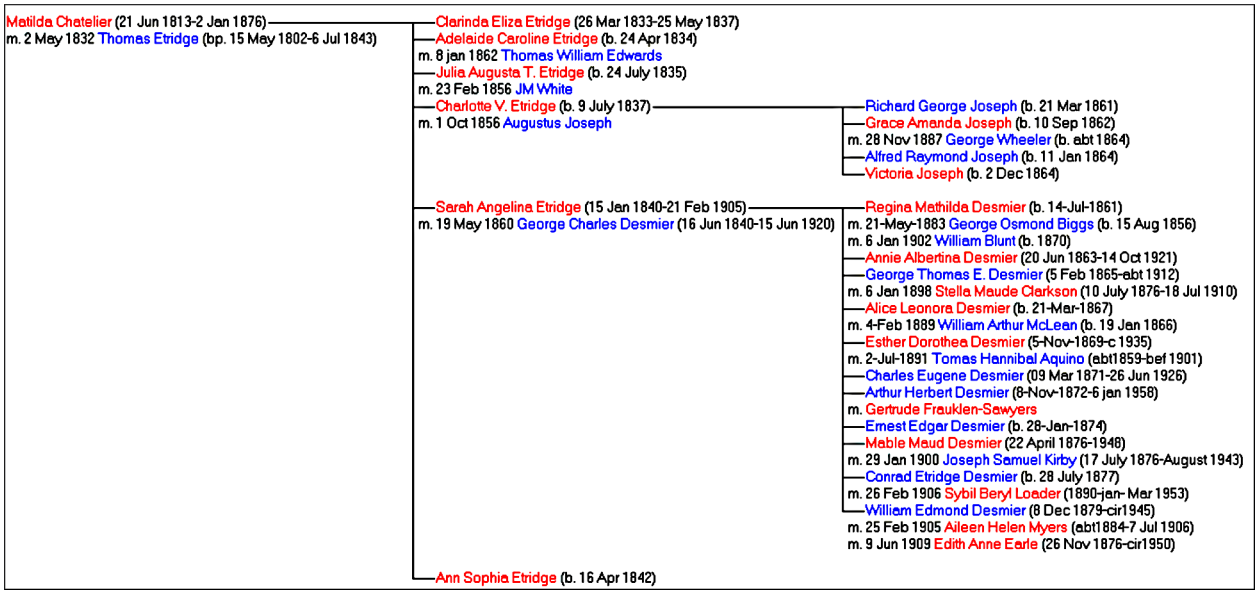
Favorite Share Flag

Eugene Chatelier record of burial, Salem, Madras source: Google Books

Matilda Chatelier

5th child of Jean Francois Chatelier and Theresia Pereira

By the time that Matilda was born in 1813 her father Jean Francois was a writer in the retirement office. At 19 years old she married Thomas Etridge in 1832. Five years later, at the birth of their first


Matilda Chatelier (21 Jun 1813-2 Jan 1876)
m. 2 May 1832 Thomas Etridge (bp. 15 May 1802-6 Jul 1843)
Clarinda Eliza Etridge (26 Mar 1833-25 May 1837)
Adelaide Caroline Etridge (b. 24 Apr 1834)
m. 8 jan 1862 Thomas William Edwards
Julia Augusta T. Etridge (b. 24 July 1835)
m. 23 Feb 1856 JM White
Charlotte V. Etridge (b. 9 July 1837)
m. 1 Oct 1856 Augustus Joseph
Richard George Joseph (b. 21 Mar 1861)
Grace Amanda Joseph (b. 10 Sep 1862)
m. 28 Nov 1887 George Wheeler (b. abt 1864)
Alfred Raymond Joseph (b. 11 Jan 1864)
Victoria Joseph (b. 2 Dec 1864)
Sarah Angelina Etridge (15 Jan 1840-21 Feb 1905)
m. 19 May 1860 George Charles Desmier (16 Jun 1840-15 Jun 1920)
Regina Mathilda Desmier (b. 14-Jul-1861)
m. 21-May-1883 George Osmond Biggs (b. 15 Aug 1856)
m. 6 Jan 1902 William Blunt (b. 1870)
Annie Albertina Desmier (20 Jun 1863-14 Oct 1921)
George Thomas E. Desmier (5 Feb 1865-abt 1912)
m. 6 Jan 1898 Stella Maude Clarkson (10 July 1876-18 Jul 1910)
Alice Leonora Desmier (b. 21-Mar-1867)
m. 4-Feb 1889 William Arthur McLean (b. 19 Jan 1866)
Esther Dorothea Desmier (5-Nov-1869-c 1935)
m. 2-Jul-1891 Tomas Hannibal Aquino (abt1859-bef 1901)
Charles Eugene Desmier (09 Mar 1871-26 Jun 1926)
Arthur Herbert Desmier (8-Nov-1872-6 jan 1958)
m. Gertrude Frauklen-Sawyers
Ernest Edgar Desmier (b. 28-Jan-1874)
Mable Maud Desmier (22 April 1876-1948)
m. 29 Jan 1900 Joseph Samuel Kirby (17 July 1876-August 1943)
Conrad Etridge Desmier (b. 28 July 1877)
m. 26 Feb 1906 Sybil Beryl Loader (1890-jan- Mar 1953)
William Edmond Desmier (8 Dec 1879-cir1945)
m. 25 Feb 1905 Aileen Helen Myers (abt1884-7 Jul 1906)
m. 9 Jun 1909 Edith Anne Earle (26 Nov 1876-cir1950)
Ann Sophia Etridge (b. 16 Apr 1842)

daughter, his occupation was given as a merchant but by the time of their sixth and last recorded daughter was born five years later his occupation was a schoolmaster. Matilda died the following year of cholera.

I am descended from their fifth child Sarah Angelina who married George Charles Desmier in Hyderabad, Sind when she was 20 years old (refer to chapter 9 for more information on this family line).

Charlotte Chatelier

6th child of Jean Francois Chatelier and Theresia Pereira

All that is known about Charlotte is that in 1837 she married John Blacker a sergeant in the artillery when she was 21 years old.

Theresia Leonora Chatelier

7th child of Jean Francois Chatelier and Theresia Pereira

Born in Tanjore, Theresia married her step brother in law, John Etridge in 1835 in Tanjore. John was a senior assistant apothocary with the 6th regiment of the light cavalry. Her younger brother married Susan Casey about four months earlier.

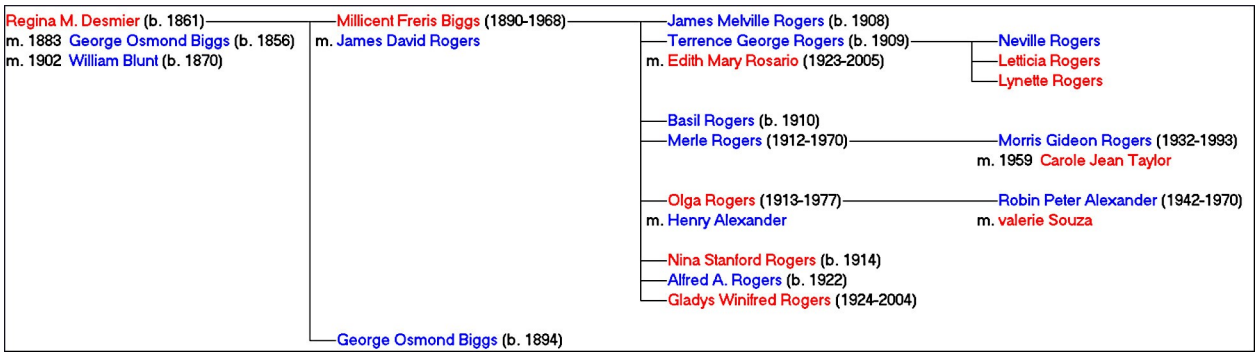
Joseph Chatelier

8th child of Jean Francois Chatelier and Theresia Pereira

Joseph married Elizabeth Snell in Vepery, Madras in 1841. he died in Cuttack in 1852 when he was proffesion was a sub assistant surveyor.

Regina Mathilda Desmier

1st daughter of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1861)


Regina M. Desmier (b. 1861)
m. 1883 George Osmond Biggs (b. 1856)
m. 1902 William Blunt (b. 1870)
Millicent Freris Biggs (1890-1968)
m. James David Rogers
George Osmond Biggs (b. 1894)
James Melville Rogers (b. 1908)
Terrence George Rogers (b. 1909)
m. Edith Mary Rosario (1923-2005)
Neville Rogers
Letticia Rogers
Lynette Rogers
Basil Rogers (b. 1910)
Merle Rogers (1912-1970)
Morris Gideon Rogers (1932-1993)
m. 1959 Carole Jean Taylor
Olga Rogers (1913-1977)
m. Henry Alexander
Robin Peter Alexander (1942-1970)
m. valerie Souza
Nina Stanford Rogers (b. 1914)
Alfred A. Rogers (b. 1922)
Gladys Winifred Rogers (1924-2004)

Regina was born in 1861 when her father was a clerk in the Collector's Office in Hyderabad. She married George Osmond Biggs a Permanent Way Inspector with the Railway at Hyderabad in 1883. George was from Mirpur in Upper Sindh and the son of George, a Veterinary Surgeon in Calcutta, and Livinia Victor. Both Regina and George were described as Eurasian on their marriage extract. Family information passed down to descendant Cameron Rogers indicates that Regina gave birth to at least two children. Millicent Freris Eileen Biggs (b 1890) and George Osmond Biggs (b 1894). Millicent married James David Rogers and the couple had at least 10 children. James was employed as a telegraph inspector in Murzaffarpur north of Patna in 1914 when Millicent gave birth to twins. Millicent died in 1968 in Gomoh a town west of Calcutta. Members of the Rogers family are settled in Australia.

I have DNA matches with several descendants of this family. Alexander Giallo is descended from Olga Rogers. Cameron Rogers and Benjamin Rogers are descendants of Merle Rogers. Neville Rogers is descended from Terence George Rogers. See chapter 23.

George had died by 1902 as then Regina married bachelor William Blunt, an engine driver, in Calcutta. Laura believed that they later immigrated to East Africa (although she may have confused her with her daughter Millicent who did go to Africa for a time). A family story is that William is reputed to have discovered what he thought was gold in Africa but it was probably iron pyrites. It was known for evermore in the family as ‘Blunt's Gold’.

Annie Albertina Desmier

2nd daughter of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1863)

Annie became blind at 14 years of age and in maturity lived in Poona with her sister Esther and later with another sister, Mable Maud. Mable took her to Goa to the Exposition of St Francis Xavier. This event used to occur every 10 years and was attended by thousands of pilgrims hoping for miracle cures of their ills. According to Eric, son of her brother William Edmond Desmier, she lived with William's family in her latter years when he was away at boarding school. She died in 1921 in Allahabad of cerebral malaria.

George Thomas Edwin Desmier

1st son of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1865)

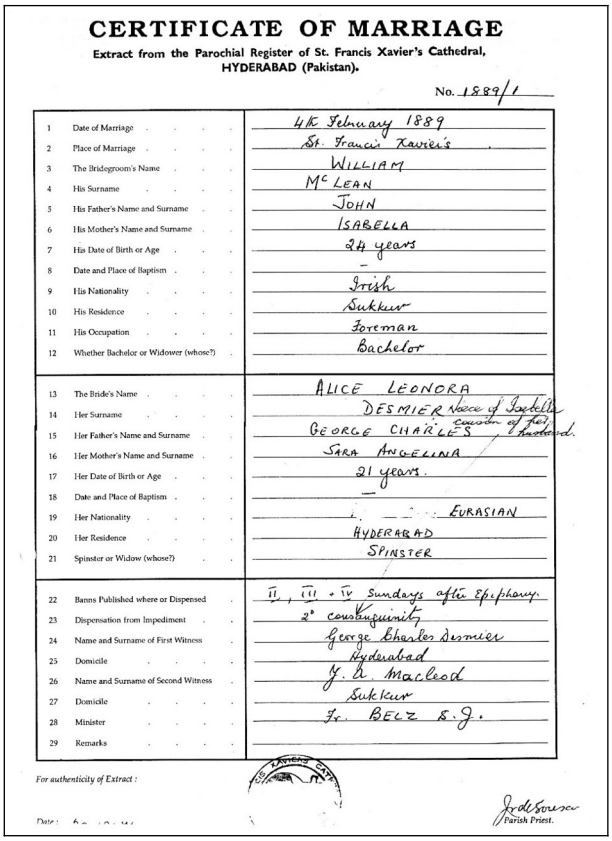
George's Godparent at his baptism was his aunt Isabella McLean (née Desmier). His abode at time of marriage was Mandalay, Burma where he was a locomotive foreman with the railways. His wife Stella came from Toungoo also in Burma. She died giving birth to their eighth child, Herbert.

More details of his descendants can be found in chapter 9.

Alice Leonora Desmier

3rd daughter of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1867)

Alice married her first cousin William McLean in Hyderabad by special licence in 1889 when she was 21 years old. William, 24 years old, was from Sukkur and described as Irish even though he was born in Karachi and his mother, Isabella Desmier, was born in Hyderabad. Laura Weeks (née Aquino) believed that they also immigrated to Kenya.



CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE

Extract from the Parochial Register of St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral, HYDERABAD (Pakistan).

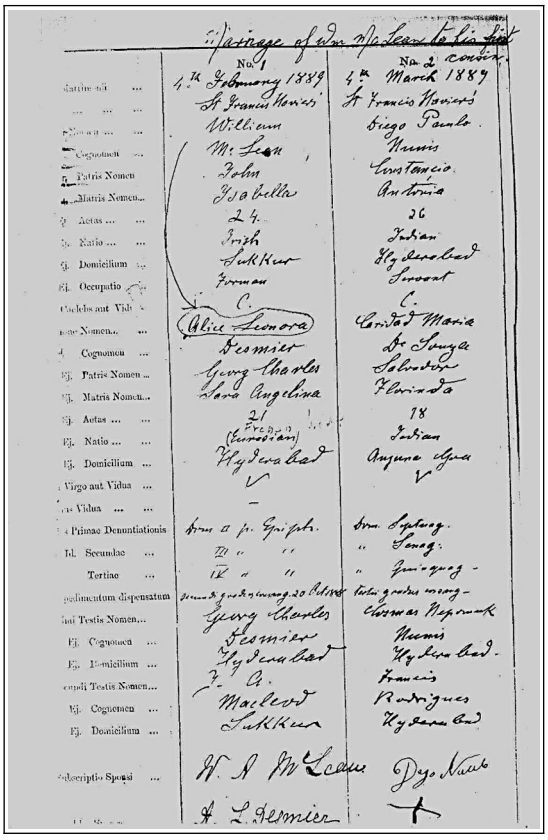
No. 1889/1

1	Date of Marriage	4th February 1889
2	Place of Marriage	St. Francis Xavier's
3	The Bridegroom's Name	WILLIAM
4	His Surname	Mc LEAN
5	His Father's Name and Surname	JOHN
6	His Mother's Name and Surname	ISABELLA
7	His Date of Birth or Age	24 years
8	Date and Place of Baptism	–
9	His Nationality	Irish
10	His Residence	Sukkur
11	His Occupation	Foreman
12	Whether Bachelor or Widower (whose?)	Bachelor
13	The Bride's Name	ALICE LEONORA
14	Her Surname	DESMIER Niece of Isabella
15	Her Father's Name and Surname	GEORGE CHARLES Cousin of the Husband.
16	Her Mother's Name and Surname	SARA ANGELINA
17	Her Date of Birth or Age	21 years.
18	Date and Place of Baptism	–
19	Her Nationality	EURASIAN
20	Her Residence	HYDERABAD
21	Spinster or Widow (whose?)	SPINSTER
22	Banns Published where or Dispensed	II, III & IV Sundays after Epiphany.
23	Dispensation from Impediment	2° consanguinity
24	Name and Surname of First Witness	George Charles Desmier Hyderabad
25	Domicile	
26	Name and Surname of Second Witness	J. A. Macleod Sukkur
27	Domicile	
28	Minister	Fr. BELZ S.J.
29	Remarks	

For authenticity of Extract :

Date :

Parish Priest.



Marriage of William Arthur McLean (son of Isabella Desmier) to his cousin Alice Leonora Desmier
Image on the left is an extract from the cathedral register sent to Robert Gibbs. The image on the right is thought to be a copy of the return (No 1) sent to London in 1889.

Esther Dorothea Desmier

4th daughter of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1869)

Esther married Thomas Hannibal Aquino in Hyderabad when she was 21 years old. Thomas was 32 years old, an assistant surgeon and described as Portuguese on the marriage extract. Esther was described as French.

Details of Esther's family follow in chapter 9.

Charles Eugene Desmier

2nd son of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1871)

According to some family legends, Charles is thought to have spent time in Africa. At the time of his death, 55 year old Charles, was a draughtsman in Karachi. He died of Bright's disease (kidneys).

Arthur Herbert Desmier

3rd son of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1872)

Arthur was born in Kotri but like many others of the family was baptised at the St Francis Xavier Cathedral in Hyderabad. Kotri was a town on the opposite bank of the river to Hyderabad. He travelled to Kenya to work on the railways as did some of his other brothers but did not return to India. In 1922 he was a carriage examiner for the Ugandan Railways and his wife Gertrude was also a clerk there.

More on his family follow in chapter 12.

Ernest Edgar Desmier

4th son of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1874)

Nothing other than his birth and baptism have been found.

Mable Maud Desmier

5th daughter of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1876)

Mable was the ninth child of George Charles and Sarah. Godparents for Mable were Edwin and Lisa Desmier (relationship not determined). She married Joseph Samuel Kirby who, at the time of marriage, was a foreman involved with building the bridge over the Indus at Kotri where the Desmier family lived.

Details of Mable's children follow in chapter 13.

Conrad Etridge Desmier

5th son of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1877)

Conrad is known to have travelled to Africa for work with William Edmond. He was back in Calcutta by 1906 when he married Sybil Beryl Loader.

More details on the descendants of Conrad and Sybil follow in chapter 14.

William Edmond Desmier

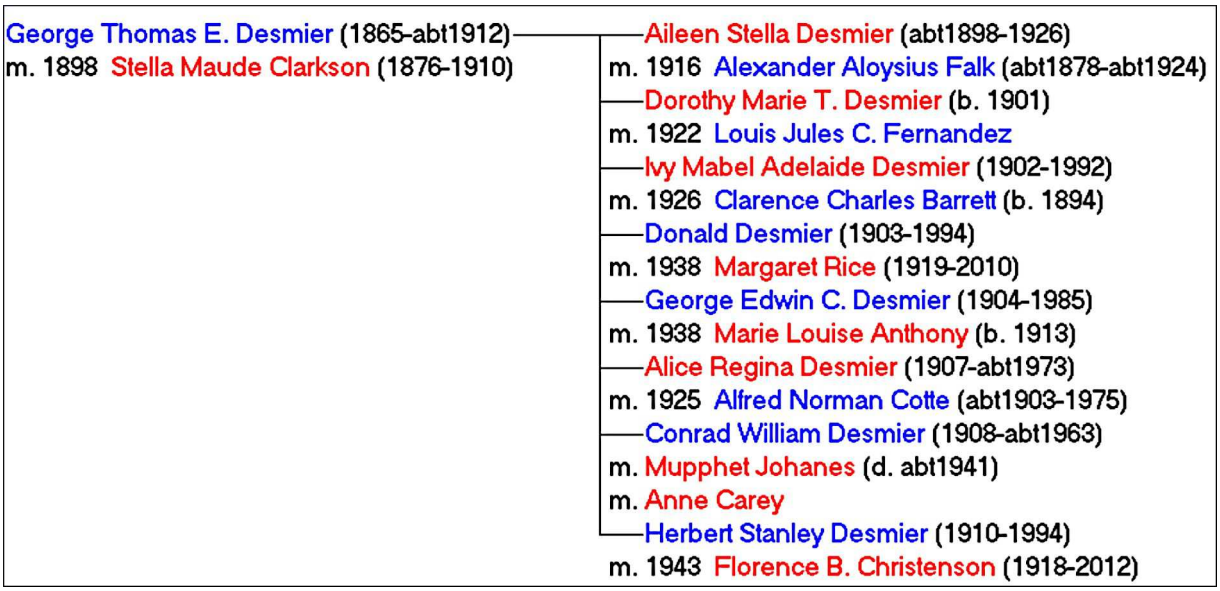
6th son of George Charles Desmier & Sarah (b1879)

William Edmond Desmier was the eleventh and youngest child in his family and was born in 1879. At the age of 23 he was working as a fireman for the Indian and Peninsular Railway Co and was based at Rajhanwali in the Punjab. It was at this time that he met and married his first wife Aileen. They were married at Ferozapur. Unfortunately Aileen died about 18 months after their marriage. Following her death William went to Kenya in East Africa. It is unknown whether he went with his brother Conrad or separately, however, both worked on the railways in Africa and both later returned to India. When he married Edith Anne Earle in 1909 in Calcutta he was an engine driver and Edith was working as a teacher. William undertook studies to qualify as a professional engineer and worked for, not only several railway companies but also the Public Works Department.

More details on William, Edith and their family follow in chapter 15.

Chapter 10

GEORGE THOMAS EDWIN DESMIER


George Thomas E. Desmier (1865-abt1912)
m. 1898 Stella Maude Clarkson (1876-1910)
Aileen Stella Desmier (abt1898-1926)
m. 1916 Alexander Aloysius Falk (abt1878-abt1924)
Dorothy Marie T. Desmier (b. 1901)
m. 1922 Louis Jules C. Fernandez
Ivy Mabel Adelaide Desmier (1902-1992)
m. 1926 Clarence Charles Barrett (b. 1894)
Donald Desmier (1903-1994)
m. 1938 Margaret Rice (1919-2010)
George Edwin C. Desmier (1904-1985)
m. 1938 Marie Louise Anthony (b. 1913)
Alice Regina Desmier (1907-abt1973)
m. 1925 Alfred Norman Cotte (abt1903-1975)
Conrad William Desmier (1908-abt1963)
m. Mupphet Johanes (d. abt1941)
m. Anne Carey
Herbert Stanley Desmier (1910-1994)
m. 1943 Florence B. Christenson (1918-2012)

George was the 3rd child of George Charles Desmier & Sarah Etridge.

Although on his marriage certificate he gave his name as Edwin, on the baptism certificates of all his children this was changed to Edward (even though one son was baptised with the name Edwin). His occupation was stated as engine driver for the Burma Railways on his children's baptism certificates from 1905 to 1910 and as loco foreman_ in 1917.

The following paragraphs are taken from a letter sent to me by Florence, George's daughter in law and the wife of his eighth son, Herbert.

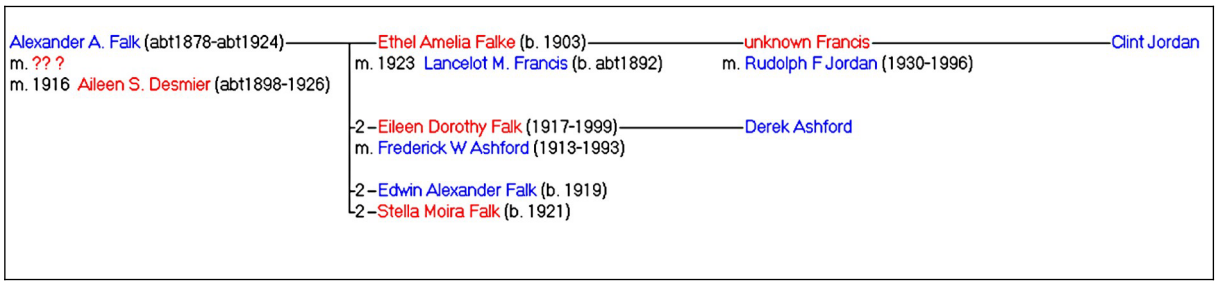
George Thomas Edwin Desmier fell in love with an Anglican's daughter Stella Maud Clarkson. In those days if Catholics married someone from another religious sect they had to do so "Behind the Altar". Young Desmier was not going to be dictated to; and so he caused quite a stir when he (as a Roman Catholic man) married an Anglican girl in her church, denounced his religion and had all eight children brought up as Anglicans. These were the pioneers who defied convention and hacked their way through the jungle - breaking down unnecessary barriers or hindrances - others followed. Some for good and others not so good. However, he repented years later on his death bed and when he received the last rites he requested the Roman Catholic priest to baptise the eight children. Herbert, the youngest, was then six years old.

Sadly I disliked this about Herbert's dad (George Thomas Edwin Desmier) He had nothing to do with the innocent babe - because (as some fathers did react in the same way for some reason, genuine sorrow or people's opinions) "his birth caused my wife's death" Herbert was relegated to the grandparents (Clarkson's) but my Herbert came through and we, the family, adored him.

Aileen Stella Desmier

1st daughter of George Thomas Edwin Desmier & Stella

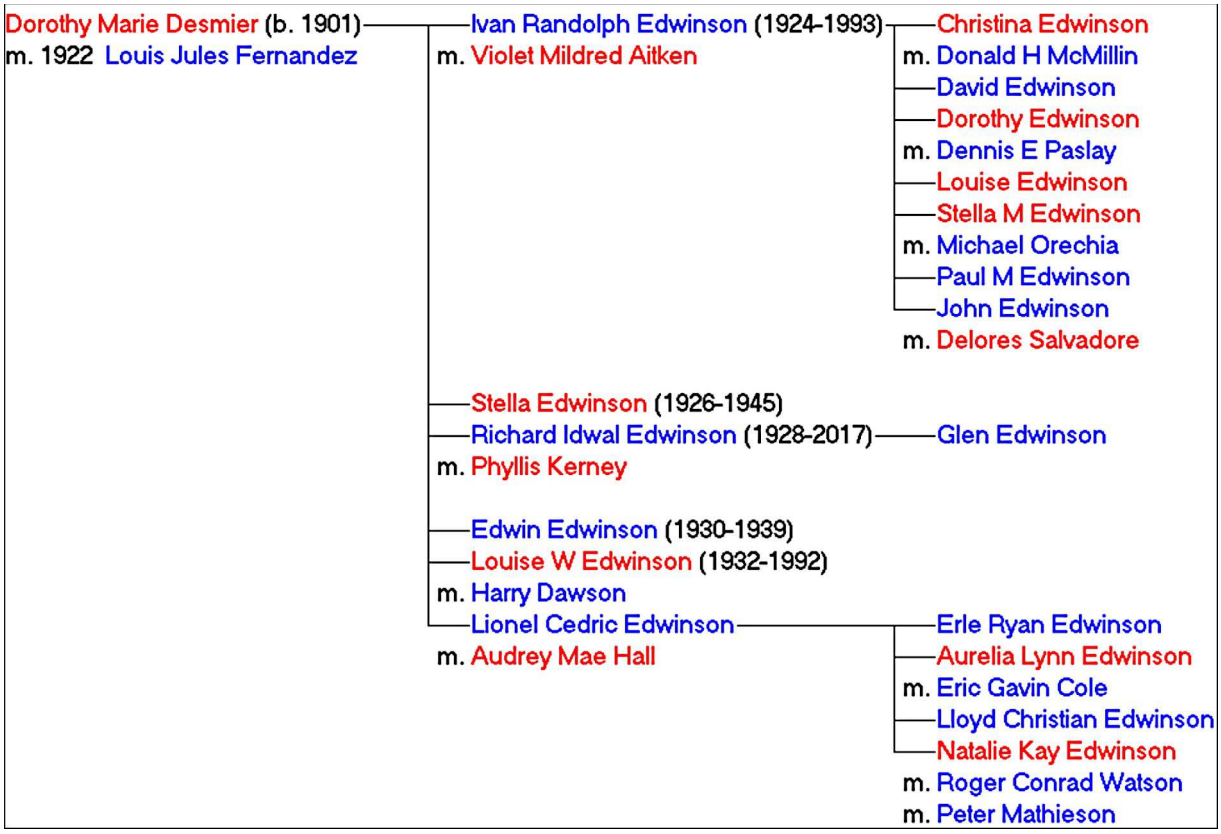
Aileen married widower Alexander Aloysious Falk(e), a driver for the Burma Mines Railways in Maymo in 1916. They are believed to have had three children.


Alexander A. Falk (abt1878-abt1924)
m. ??.?
m. 1916 Aileen S. Desmier (abt1898-1926)
Ethel Amelia Falke (b. 1903)
m. 1923 Lancelot M. Francis (b. abt1892)
unknown Francis
m. Rudolph F Jordan (1930-1996)
Clint Jordan
2 – Eileen Dorothy Falk (1917-1999)
m. Frederick W Ashford (1913-1993)
Derek Ashford
2 – Edwin Alexander Falk (b. 1919)
2 – Stella Moira Falk (b. 1921)

I have a DNA match with Aileen through Derek Ashford. I also have a link to Alexander Falk's family in common with Clint Jordan. This traces back through the Francis family to Charlotte Desmier (chapter 6, refer to page 50). See chapter 23 for more on DNA links.

Dorothy Marie Therese Desmier

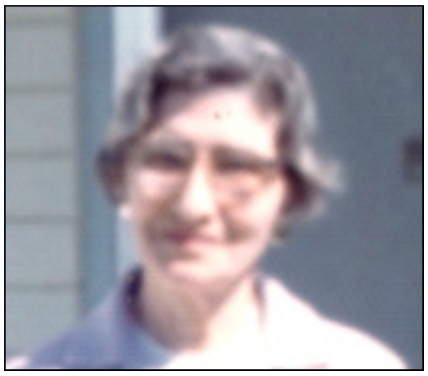
2nd daughter of George Thomas Edwin Desmier & Stella



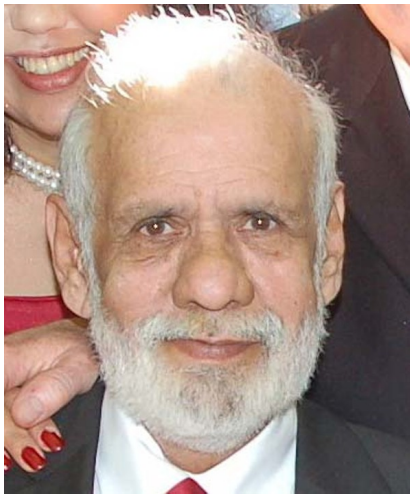
Dorothy was baptised twice, firstly in 1901 as Dortey Violet shortly after birth in the local baptist church (Toungoo) and secondly as Dorothy Marie Therese in 1918 as a Roman Catholic in Rangoon. Much of the information on the family has been provided to me by Natalie (née Edwinson).

Dorothy married Louis Jules Clarence Fernandez, a merchant, in 1922 in Rangoon, Burma. The family name was changed from Fernandez to Edwinson by deed poll in 1949. They had six children, all born

in Burma. Ivan was a Customs Officer in Rangoon before immigrating to Seattle, Washington. Stella died in Burma when she was 20 years old. Richard worked as a journalist in Burma before emigrating to California where he ran a card shop and drove a taxi. Edwin died as a child in Burma. Louise was a Carmelite nun in Burma but left the order when they would not accept her into the order in England. She later immigrated to USA and married Harry. Lionel married Audrey Mae Hall in Burma in 1959. In 1964 they immigrated to Western Australia with their three children Erle, Aurelia and Loyd. Lionel worked as an interior designer. A second daughter, Natalie, was born in Australia. I have a DNA link to this family through Glen Edwinson. See chapter 23.



Dorothy Desmier



Lionel Edwinson

Audrey Edwinson née Hall

Ivy Mabel Adelaide Desmier

3rd daughter of George Thomas Edwin Desmier & Stella

Ivy was born in Burma in 1902. She married Clarence Charles Barrett a foreman with the railway company in Maymo in 1926. They later immigrated to Britain. They are thought not to have had any children.

Clarence's sister, Edith Winifred Barrett, married assistant surgeon Henry Victor Francis in 1926. His mother was Helen Mary Longson who was the daughter of Charlotte Caroline Desmier (chapter 6).

Donald Desmier

1st son of George Thomas Edwin Desmier & Stella

Donald Desmier (1903-1994)
m. 1938 Margaret Rice (1919-2010)
- Donald D Desmier
  m. 1963 Patricia Orkney
- Patricia Desmier
  m. Rowland S Richardson
  m. - Warner
- Dennis Desmier
- Brian Desmier
  m. Vivienne Crutchley
- Colin Desmier
  m. Kim Allen

Donald was born in 1903 but was baptised in 1917 at the same time as his two younger brothers. The family was living in Toungoo and they were baptised at the Roman Catholic Cathedral there. Donald joined the Navy in 1930. In 1938 he married Margaret Rice in Blyth, Northumberland. Donald and Margaret had five children. Donald died in Northumberland in 1994

George Edwin Clarkson Desmier

2nd son of George Thomas Edwin Desmier & Stella

Marie Louise Anthony (1913-1982)
m. 1938 George Edwin C. Desmier (1904-1985)
m. Reginald J. Richardson
- Helen Anne Desmier (b. 1938)
- George Patrick Desmier (1940-1943)
- Loretta Desmier (d. 1942)
- 2 – Roger Richardson (1946-abt1985)
- 2 – Jennifer Richardson (b. abt1947)

George was baptised twice, the second time with his brothers Donald and Conrad at the Roman Catholic cathedral in Toungoo, Burma when he was 13 years old. He was baptised this time as George Thomas Desmier (BEN 422/287) although it seems that he continued to also use the name Edwin as well.

In 1938 George married Marie Anthony in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Rangoon. Marie's father was a clerk in Kadoe a town about 700 km north-west of Rangoon, her mother was Burmese.

Groom Last Name	Groom First Name	Age	Groom Occ.	Groom Abode	Bride First Name	Bride Last Name	Bride Age	Bride / Abode	Groom's Father	Bride's Father	Date of Mar.	Witnesses	Church
Desanges	Elton Clinton	25	Engineer	Rangoon	Beryl Janes	Burn (Teacher)	24	Moulmein	Eustace Desanger (Deceased)	Waltor Burn	1938 June 29	W. Burn, O. Burn, F. Burn	St. Matthew's Ch., Moulmein
Desmier	George Edwin	33	Stenographer	Rangoon	Marie Louise	Anthony	25	Rangoon	George Edwin Desmier	Joseph Anthony	1938 Aug 20	L.A. Greenwood, G.C. Fisher	Holy Trinity Cathedral, Rangoon
DeSouza	Francis Xavier	?	?	?	Lazarine Edna	Greenwood	?	?	?	?	1941?	?	St. Mary's Cathedral, Rangoon
Dewar	George Henry	21	Apprentice, I.F. Co., Docks	Moulmein	Dorothy Ma Shwe	-	17	Moulmein	Philip Dewar	James Mg Tin	1940 Feb 6	Austin Harris, M. Harris	St. Mary's Church, Moulmein

Marriage of George Edwin Desmier and Marie Anthony Rangoon 1938
Source:Anglo-Burmese Library

It is interesting that George's occupation is recorded as a stenographer at the time of both their marriage and the birth of their first daughter, Helen, in 1938. This is probably an error as on the list of evacuees (see below) from Rangoon it is Marie who is recorded as being a stenographer. Two years later, in 1940 the record of the birth of son George Patrick shows the occupation of father, George, as nil.

Surname	Child's Name	Child's Birth Date	Baptism Date	Father	Mother	Abode	Father's Occupation	Church
Desmier	George Patrick	1940 Feb 10	1940 Mar 11	George Edwin	Marie Louise	Rangoon	nil	St. Mary's Cathedral, R.C., Rangoon
Desmiere	Helen Anne	1938 Nov 21	1938 Dec 17	George Edwin	Marie Louise	Rangoon	Steno-Typist	St. Francis R.C. Church Tamwe

Baptism record of George Patrick and Helen Anne Desmier
Source: Anglo-Burmese Library

By 1942 the Japanese had invaded Burma and plans made earlier to evacuate all European inhabitants were acted upon. The family are recorded on the list of evacuees.

Evacuees A - J

Date of Arrival	Surname	First Name(s)	Address in Burma	Profession	Address in India	Route	Nationality
7-11	DESMIER	Mr and Mrs G. E. and two children	116/49th Street, Rangoon	Mr is a Gunner, Mrs is a Stenographer	C/o S. S. M. Richardson, 23 Indian Division, F.S.S., Gauhati		

Planned evacuation of the Desmier family from Rangoon 1942
Source: Anglo-Burmese Library

George and Marie became separated before the evacuation. This may have been because George was now listed as a Gunner in the army and had to stay with his Division. A family story is that Marie left him. Daughter, Helen (more about her follows), was told by her mother that her father had died during the war. The story of George's wife and family are more interesting than that of George.

The evacuation of Rangoon during the war occurred in two waves. The first started in December 1941 in response to air raids on Rangoon by the Japanese, many of these people would have gone by air or by river steamer. The second wave commenced around February 1942 in response to the fear of the imminent invasion by Japanese ground troops. Marie and the children were part of the second wave travelling overland. Unfortunately there is no information regarding the route she had to take. It was undoubtedly an arduous trek over such a long time. Helen recalled that her mother took her and her baby brother, with other evacuees on a long march into India over many months to escape the advance of the Japanese troops. They relied a lot on the support of locals for food and refuge as none of the group had much money. Occasionally they met with British troops that were able to give them some food, tend to the sick and to transport them some of the way. Many of those on the trek died. Marie was pregnant during this march. In June, during the monsoon season, and about four months after they started the trek, she gave birth to a daughter Loretta. Loretta is recorded as having died two months later in Putao, a town in the extreme north of Burma and 1500 km from the start of the trek in Rangoon. Helen has said to reporters that her mother, Marie, told her in later years that she had miscarried a baby on the trek.

Casualties

Surname	First name	Details
DERRY	The Rev. J.	Died on the trek at Taw Bang before the end of August, 1942, according to reports from Sgt. Shaw and Sub. Indura Singh – vide Margherita report of 9-10-42 and Shinbwiyang report of 17/25th September, 1942. The Rev J. Derry was attached to the Bishop's Home party
DESMIER	Loretta (two months)	Died on 7-8-42. Loretta was the baby of Mrs Desmier who was evacuated from Putao. reported by the D/C, Putao
DEWSBURY	Sgt. G.H.V.	Missing, believed Prisoner of War – a report from Burma Headquarters and effective from 19-1-42. Sgt. Dewsbury was of the Tennasserim Bn. (B.A.F.)
	Mrs Clara	

Loretta Desmier record of death Putao, Burma
Source: Anglo-Burmese Library

Marie Desmier/Richardson
(neé Anthony)
Source: N. Gupta colourised 2024

From Putao they made their way to Gauhati (Guwahati) in Assam, their destination that had been recorded in the evacuation listing. Guwahati is on the Brahmaputra river and a considerable distance west of the Burma/Assam border but was used as a location for refugees and there was a hospital there. That was where they arrived at the address that was recorded on the evacuee list. The distance by road today is about 1300 km.

SSM may be Staff Sergeant Major, and the FSS Field Support Station. The person was Reginald James Richardson and he became the second husband of Marie.

From Assam they made their way to Calcutta. Helen is quoted in other documents saying that her brother, George, was frail but survived the journey into India and down to Calcutta before dying of smallpox (IMDB states that young George died in 1946). Marie gave birth to a son, Roger Richardson in 1943. Helen has recalled that after some years in Calcutta they moved to Hyderabad and then Deolali before reaching

Bombay in 1947. It was in Bombay in 1947 that Marie gave birth to a third daughter, Jennifer Richardson.

Reginald and Marie were together until about 1946/7 when he returned to England without his family. Marie worked as a nurse to support herself and the children.

It is known that George subsequently immigrated to England in 1956 and stayed with the family of his younger brother, Herbert, before immigrating to America in 1958. On the shipping passenger lists, both to UK from Rangoon, Burma and to the USA from England, he was listed as single and worked as an office assistant. Records show that George died in San Francisco, California, in 1985.

Marie is believed to have died in 1982 (IMDB).

Helen Richardson and her siblings

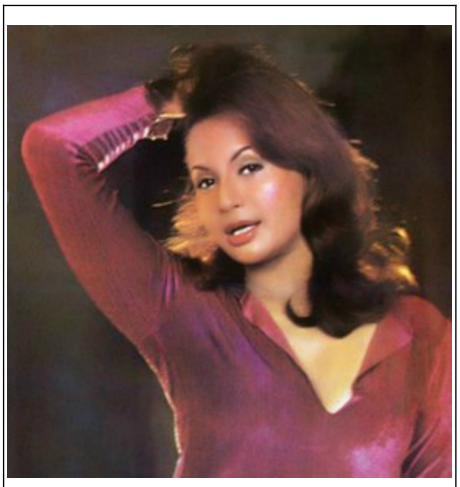
Helen was the first child of George E.C. Desmier and Marie Anthony

Helen was born in 1938. Her mother and her family took the name of her second husband/partner Richardson. Helen always knew her mother as Marlene.

Helen began dancing and acting at a young age to supplement her mother's income as a nurse. She went on to become a famous Bollywood dancer and actress appearing in more than 500 films and received many awards. There are several accounts available about Helen's childhood and career as a dancer. All are brief about her childhood and the accounts vary considerably. Some say she was descended from a Spanish or French father; another states she was UK born; all state that her father died during the war. I have only researched information concerning her parents and childhood and have done this mostly using documentation that is available online and with the help of a nephew of Helen, N. Gupta. It is understood that the name 'Jairag' sometimes included in Helen's name has no association to the family and may have been to provide an Indian link to her name.

Baptism of N. Gupta
l to r: Roger Richardson, Jennifer Gupta (nee Richardson) Helen Richardson (Desmier), Narendra Gupta
source: N. Gupta, colourised 2024

Helen in 2019
Photo by By Bollywood Hungama, CC BY 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=114184154



Helen posing for Filmfare Magazine 1969

A book about Helen was published by Jerry Pinto in 2006, *Helen: The Life and Times of an H-Bomb*, (Penguin Books, India) which went on to win the National Film Award for Best Book on Cinema in 2007. There is also a Wikipedia page on Helen's life and career (Wikipedia, 2024). Helen was married to film director Prem Narayan Arora from 1957 to 1974 when she divorced him because he was spending her money without her knowledge and left her penniless. She married her current husband, screenwriter Salim Khan, in 1982. Most recently Helen was the 2022 recipient of the Raj Kapoor Award. This is the highest lifetime achievement award in Hindi cinema that is presented annually by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Maharashtra, India

Helen's half-brother, Roger Richardson, had some acting roles before his death in the 1980's. Jennifer is married to Narendra Gupta and it was their son, Nikhil, that supplied me with some photos and corrected some of the information.

Alice Regina Desmier

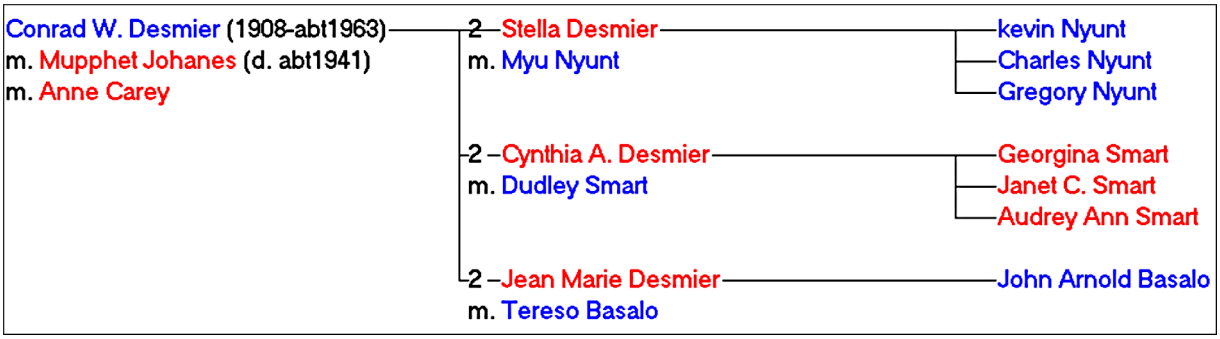
4th daughter of George Thomas Edwin Desmier & Stella

Alice was first baptised in Toungoo, Burma in 1907, 49 days after her birth. She was baptised a second time in 1918 in a Roman Catholic cathedral (at the same time as sister, Dorothy) where her birth year was recorded as 1905 (same day and month, different year).

She married Alfred Norman Cotte, a railway foreman from Rangoon in 1925. At this time her residence was recorded as Yamethin. about 400 km north of Rangoon. At least three children Noreen, Barbara and James were born in Toungoo. The family later immigrated to Australia. They are known to have had six children. Alfred (recorded as Norman Alfred Cotte) died in a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia in 1975 as did Alice in 1980.

Conrad William Desmier

3rd son of George Thomas Edwin Desmier & Stella



Conrad was Baptised a second time with his brothers Donald and George when he was nine years old at the Cathedral, this time he was given the names Conrad Cyril. He had three children with his second wife Ann, Stella, Cynthia and Jean. Cynthia is believed to have immigrated to Western Australia with her family.

Herbert Stanley Louis Desmier

4th son of George Thomas Edwin Desmier & Stella

Herbert Desmier in his weightlifting days. Photo source F. Desmier

Herbert followed his father's footsteps by working for the Burma Railway. During the war Herbert served with the British Army in Burma. For his war service Herbert was awarded the Chowringhee and Burma Star medals and was mentioned in despatches by the then Governor of Burma, Sir Hugh Dorman Smith, for loyal, resolute and devoted service during the Burma campaign.

It was during the war on 8th March 1943 at Kirkee near Poona that he married Florence Barbara (Christenson). In October 1949 Herbert, Florence and their 4 children; Stella, Edwina, Cheryl and Herman immigrated to UK. Their youngest daughter, Penny was born in Nuneaton where the family settled shortly after their arrival. Herbert worked in the UK for Courtaulds.

The following paragraph is extracted from a letter to me from Herbert's wife, Florence.

…… Herbert is remembered by his family and friends as an exemplary person in the fashion of a devoted husband, father and a friend. He was a simple family man who never craved, nor even liked outside interests. He was also renowned for unrivalled feats of strength that earned him the nickname "Garth". He could lift 220lb with his teeth, make chains by bending nails and on his 75th birthday was pictured in the Nuneaton Tribune holding an 8lb mallet out at arms length and was described as "Nuneaton's premier physical culturist".

The following article about Herbert and his father George Thomas Edwin Desmier was also contributed by Herbert's wife, Florence.

……. Now, moving away from the Desmiers, Herbert's maternal grandfather held a high position in the Masonic Lodge in Burma. Herbert's eldest sister, Dorothy Edwinson, said he dressed up like a bishop, had a cap, like our RC bishops wear and held the staff on ceremonial occasions. He was a member until his death in about 1931. He lived in Toungoo, Burma and when he retired from the Burma Railways (his designation being Station Master) built his house there in the District he loved. All the Clarksons are buried in the only RC Cemetery in Toungoo, Burma - but when the Japanese occupied Burma from 1942 - 1945 they shipped back to Japan (among other things) all the beautiful or ordinary tombstones. Among these was Herbert's mothers of course. A large one inscribed "Rock of Ages" an angel on either side holding this inscription which was in the form of an arch.

Young George Desmier (Herbert's dad) was also a strong man. Men then, in their late forties, early fifties - used to look at the up and coming weightlifter (young Herbert at 19 yrs) and smilingly tell each other "He is his father's son".

Among workmen, as we have all discovered, there is a bully. A man by the name of Conway was one. Whenever he arrived at a railway Running Room or Rest Room (for locomotive drivers to sleep the night before they returned home to their town) he would choose one particular reclining chair to relax in and get the best view etc. To him there was no such saying as "First come first served" he would literally kick any man off that chair. Of course one evening George Desmier was "innocently" in that

chair. The other railway drivers knew that Conway was on his way down to his chair after his bath and they knew "Sparks" were going to fly. I leave the rest to your imagination. Conway had to concede disgracefully. About twenty years later this (now old) man still a bully walked down the stairs to His chair to find a young 18 year old Fireman innocently sitting in it. He slinked quietly away when Herbert told him not to loose the respect he (Herbert) gave him as an old man in the only way my Herbert knew how. On being asked who the kid was, in unison the onlookers said 'Young Desmier". This brought back memories to Conway. The old bull now took a back seat. The Desmiers are all stubborn and could be awkward as well. But I loved Herbert so much - I crawled - meaning I would not and could not retaliate when he was in an angry mood - which thank God lasted only 10 - 15 minutes. As he turned older he was able to "Eat out of my hands" - At 84 years he still did not have one white hair. My children too have black hair. I guess its a freak of nature, to their benefit; or - they are not worriers. The saying is "If you worry you turn white" (or grey).

Herbert and Florence (née Christenson)

Some towns and cities in Burma relevant to the Desmier families
Position of towns indicative only

Rangoon (Yangon)

Rangoon is located about 20 miles from the coast at the confluence of the Pegu and Hiaing rivers. The British first established a trading factory in Rangoon in 1794. They later seized Yangon and all of Lower Burma in the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852, and subsequently transformed Yangon into the commercial and political hub of British Burma.

Maymo

Maymyo, now known as Pyin Oo Lwin or Pyin U Lwin, is a scenic hill townabout 60 kms east of Mandalay, and at an elevation of 1,070 meters. The town was estimated to have a population of around 255,000 in 2014.

Yamethin

A town in the central-northern_region occupying a high point on the central plain. For centuries it was an important junction on the caravan trade route between the Shan region to the east and_Myingyan, 90 miles (145 km) northwest, on the_Irrawaddy River. Modern Yamethin, a municipality since 1888, has railway workshops and is irrigated by the Kyeni Tank (reservoir), built in the 11th century, to the southeast. It is linked by road and railway to Yangon (Rangoon) and_Mandalay. The surrounding area produces_rice, sugarcane, corn (maize), and millet. Pop. (1983) 23,055.

Toungoo

A city about 220km north of Rangoon with mountain ranges to the east and west. The main industry is in forestry products, with teak and other hardwoods_extracted from the mountains. The city is known for its areca palms, to the extent that a Burmese proverb for unexpected good fortune is equated to a "Betel_lover winning a trip to Toungoo". The city is famous in Burmese history for the Toungoo dynasty which ruled the country for over 200 years between the 16th and 18th centuries. Taungoo was the capital of Burma in 1510–1539 and 1551–1552.

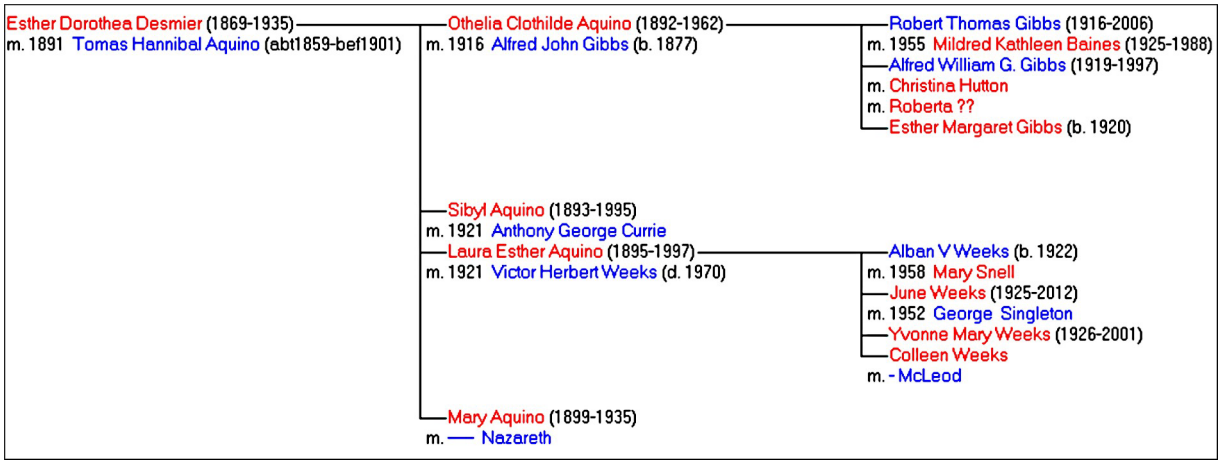
Putao

A British military output, Fort Hertz, was established in 1914 near the town of Putao. Due to its remoteness in the far north, it was never captured by the Japanese military during the Burma Campaign, remaining in Allied hands throughoutWorld War II. Although later disbanded, the remains of the fort are still visible.

Sources: British Burma Gazeteer (1879) (accessed through Archive.org) and Wikipedia

Chapter 11

ESTHER DOROTHEA DESMIER & TOMAS HANNIBAL AQUINO


Esther Dorothea Desmier (1869-1935)
m. 1891 Tomas Hannibal Aquino (abt1859-bef1901)
Othelia Clothilde Aquino (1892-1962)
m. 1916 Alfred John Gibbs (b. 1877)
Robert Thomas Gibbs (1916-2006)
m. 1955 Mildred Kathleen Baines (1925-1988)
Alfred William G. Gibbs (1919-1997)
m. Christina Hutton
m. Roberta ??
Esther Margaret Gibbs (b. 1920)
Sibyl Aquino (1893-1995)
m. 1921 Anthony George Currie
Laura Esther Aquino (1895-1997)
m. 1921 Victor Herbert Weeks (d. 1970)
Alban V Weeks (b. 1922)
m. 1958 Mary Snell
June Weeks (1925-2012)
m. 1952 George Singleton
Yvonne Mary Weeks (1926-2001)
Colleen Weeks
m. - McLeod
Mary Aquino (1899-1935)
m. — Nazareth

Esther was the 5th child of George Charles Desmier & Sarah

The following account about Esther was sent to me by her grandson, Robert Gibbs:

My maternal grandmother, Esther Dorothea Desmier married Tomas Hannibal Rodrigues Aquino in July 1891. Esther and Tomaz, it is said, had six children, four daughters and two sons, both of the sons died young. The eldest daughter, Othelia married Alfred John Gibbs who was from English and Southern Irish stock. Tomaz, who was born in Goa, had obtained a first class degree in medicine from Bombay University and had been appointed as an Assistant Surgeon in the Hospital at Hyderabad, Sindh.

Esther Aquino (née) Desmier with her grandchildren Rear: Robert & Alfred Gibbs, left: Alban Weeks, right: Margaret Gibbs, in her arms Yvonne Weeks (Colourised 2024)

Tomaz' position was a Government of India appointment so whenever there was an outbreak of cholera, typhoid or whatever, he was sent to be the doctor in charge of the epidemic which is why their children were born at such great distances from each other; my mother, Othelia in Hyderabad; Sybil in Bombay; Laura in Gadag and Mary in Sukkur. Tomaz, according, to one of my aunts, was allergic to horses (his main form of transport). Eventually he was taken seriously ill and went to be treated by his doctor brother in Baroda (now Vadodara)

where he died in 1902. His wife, Esther (then about 31) was a good seamstress and having already seen Bombay might have been advised to go to Poona with her young family. It was in the hills and it was an army town so here would be a better chance of part-time work at least. Her father, George Charles (who by now would have been 60) and her mother, Sarah, both died in Poona, so they must also have left Hyderabad.

Esther stayed in Poona until 1908/9 (she had a house in Arsenal Road). From there she moved to Watson's Annexe in Bombay which was close to the Gateway of India. (Information from her daughter Sibyl). Esther later moved to live with her daughter Mary in Jaipur until her death in 1935/6.

Othelia Clothilde Aquino

1st child of Esther Dorothea Desmier & Tomas Aquino

This information was sent to me by Othelia's son Robert Gibbs.

My mother, known to her family as Bijou, met my father, Alfred John Gibbs, in Bombay and, I suspect, eloped with him to Hong Kong. They were married there in January 1916 and lived on the Kowloon side in Durban Villas (near the Peninsular Hotel). He worked in a chemists shop in Victoria, Hong Kong. Both my brother Alfred and myself were born in Hong Kong where we resided for two years after which we set off for Calcutta where we spent about five years. My parents separated and so the rest of us had a long train journey from Calcutta to Bombay, where we stayed with my Grandmother, Esther. We lived very close to the Gateway of India and to the Taj Mahal Hotel - the centre of evening life for the young men and women. In 1928 my mother brought my brother and myself to England and we were put into a school in Chertsey, Surrey. The school was run by the Salesians, an ecclesiastical order founded by Don Bosco. I was there three years and then taken to live with the parents of one of my mothers friends from India. They lived in far off Bradford. In 1933 my mother came to live in England and after many moves we settled in Shipley (near Bradford) where my mother bought herself a house. She had a hard struggling life and eventually died in Knaresborough in October 1962 a fortnight or so before her 70th birthday.

Othelia with her children in England
From left; Alfred, Margaret & Robert
Colourised 2024)

Robert Thomas Gibbs

1st child of Othelia Aquino and Alfred Gibbs

The following is an extract from a letter written to me by Robert:

I was born in October 1916 in Kowloon Hong Kong and when I was about two years old the family moved back to India We spent about five years in Calcutta and when my parents separated my mother and we three children moved to Bombay to live at first with my grandmother. My first memory of Bombay was Watson's Annexe where my grandmother had a large ground floor flat. Apart from us my mother's sister, Mary, shared the flat. Aunt Mary was studying to be a doctor. My mother soon got herself a job in Bombay and life went on serenely for all of us. I remember occasionally my brother

and I went fishing from the sea wall near the Gateway of India. When I was nine and my brother eight we too were sent to Panchgani where our sister was at school. I remember it because there was a priest there who encouraged the kids to collect insects like beetles etc for him. These he used to pickle and add to his collection Things occasionally went wrong because on one occasion a young girl picked up a black beetle which turned out to be a scorpion This meant of' course primitive treatment such as burning her hand with red hot pieces of wood and without anaesthetics. Naturally her screams could be heard throughout the compound. The boys also used to go hunting and killing snakes which earned them extra sweets.

Robert (Bob) Gibbs

The next year my brother and I were sent to a Jesuit school in Byculla, Bombay. It was very large because it contained about 1,000 boys from 10 up to 17 or l8. Perhaps it was thought we boys had to be toughened. The discipline certainly was strict but they had a lovely camp school at Khandhala, near Poona where nearly the whole school went for the long holiday. It was very exciting being there because the village was very small and even the young boys of 10 and 11 were allowed to go exploring. We found a pool and there of course we learned one way or another to swim. Home-made wings made from a pillowcase proved a great help until one lad became separated from his pillowcase and the rest of us had to jump in and rescue him from drowning by pushing and shoving him in turn until he reached the shallow area. One afternoon on arriving at the pool we saw a large snake coiled in a slight hollow near the pool. Of course we all picked up sticks and tried to get at it but the biggest boy claimed first swipe but he missed it. The snake uncoiled like lightning and slid into the pool with all of us whooping and jumping in after it. I've often wondered how did we ever hope to get to grips with it. Anyway we never saw it again which is probably just as well. Around the village there was nothing but wild country and night times were a bit scary because we could hear Hyenas and Jackals and occasionally a Tiger in the distance. The toilets were well separated from the dormitories so most of the 10-year-olds woke a senior boy to act as an escort in an emergency. My friend and I argued that if any large animal was met it wouldn't much matter whether the boy was a senior or not so we used to wake each other which made us feel we were being very brave. One night proved very exciting because there was gunfire and sure enough the next morning the priests took us to the village and there in the middle of the dirt road lay a huge tiger which used to occasionally raid the village at nights.

Khandhala is in a beautiful setting with huge ravines 1,000 or more feet deep with steep sides. Occasionally the priests took us on picnics to the pools at the bottom of the ravines. One pool in particular was my favourite because it was big with a large waterfall at one end and it was fun to swim near the fall to see how close you dared to go. Unfortunately the climb up from the pool used to be hard and tiring but we young ones dared not stop and rest because the priest bringing up the rear clobbered our legs with a stick whenever we stopped. Looking back it was great fun and certainly strengthening. Like Panchgani, snakes were in abundance so whenever there was nothing else going

on we went hunting for snakes to kill. I don't remember any of us getting bitten. I must say, when going to the toilets in the dark I was very wary about snakes because they had the advantage at night.

In the short October holiday our uncle, Joe Kirby, took us with him on an inspection of railway works, bridges and things. We met him at Victoria railway terminus at Bombay and he ordered his sleeper carriage to be attached to a train and off we went for one glorious week. I remember him well saying "You see that bridge over there? I built that." I made my mind up to be a civil engineer like him but it didn't work out that way unfortunately.

Neither my brother nor I knew that our stay in India was soon to be over. In March 1928 my mother, brother and I left in the SS Letitia for Liverpool. My brother and I were taken to the Salesian College at Chertsey Surrey. We said goodbye to my mother in the Principal's office and she returned to work in India. By now I was 11 and my brother 10. Alfred and I settled in as best as we could in what were very different surroundings to what we were used to. We spent three reasonably happy years at the school and in 1931 I was taken out of school by my mother and put in the care of a Mr and Mrs Binns whose son was a friend of my mother in Bombay.

Despite the world-wide depression I had several different jobs of work. One of them, as fate decreed, was to work on the railway starting as a messenger boy at Bradford Forster Square Station. In the summer of 1933 my mother sent a letter instructing me to seek out a place for the family to live. As a 16 year old I did my best but the basement flat turned out to be unsuitable to my mother and so we moved to two top floor rooms near Lister Park and eventually moved to a house where mother let out rooms and took in lodgers in order to survive,

I joined the army in September 1939 very soon after the outbreak of war. I was sent to serve in Hong Kong where I was captured by the Japanese and sent to Japan as a POW. People in England heard no news of me until the end of the war. I left the army in September 1946. Whilst spending my last six months in York, I applied to be a teacher and was accepted at Lancaster training college. After training I was appointed to a school in Harrogate where I spent eight happy years (excluding a break of nearly two years doing service in Korea and Japan between 1950 and 1952). I was moved to two other schools and served until my retirement in September 1979 My last post was in a large comprehensive school of 2,000 'pupils in Knaresborough to where I had moved to live.

Robert's first wife contracted tuberculosis whilst he was in Japan as a POW and she died a few months after his return. He married a second time to Mildred Kathleen Baines from Leeds in 1955. She died in 1988. They had a daughter who is married and her family live in Yorkshire. Bob was a very enthusiastic and thorough researcher of his family history and it was through him that I discovered much more about the Desmiers from Hyderabad, Sindh. Bob died in 2006. An obituary was published in the Knaresborough press (Appendix 1).

Alfred William George Gibbs

2nd child of Othelia Aquino and Alfred Gibbs

The following is extracted from a letter written to me by his brother Robert in 1996.

Alfred was born in January 1918 in Kowloon, Hong Kong. Like many thousands of others my brother Alfred and myself went through the depression of the early and mid 1930's. He was the unluckiest in that two firms in Bradford for whom he worked went out of business and so he was thrown onto the

Alfred W.G. Gibbs

scrap heap. In early 1939 he was in very poor health so he decided to leave home and join the RAF. His first posting was in Cranwell. In March 1940 he was posted to the middle east and spent the war in and around Cairo in the accounts department where he rose to the rank of Sergeant. Towards the end of the war he volunteered to be trained for the Fleet Air Arm and was in the middle of his training when the war ended and his ambition was brought to an end. His training had been in South Africa and he saw much of that country. Having a strong organisational bent he led parties of RAF Officers and men on safaris in Kenya and Uganda. I have seen his photographs of the Murchison Falls and many other areas and they are superb. His photographic ability is very exceptional. He also shone in physical activities representing the RAF at home and abroad at cricket, hockey, and tennis In addition he was a very strong swimmer capable of doing three miles at a stretch in the open seas. In 1947 he was awarded a commission in the RAF and after 18 years of service retired as a Flight Lieutenant. What to do in civvy street now was the question because in August 1947 Alfred had married in Huddersfield and by now there were two infant sons. Alfred decided to take his line of accountancy to degree level and to his very great credit, by external study whilst at the same time doing odd jobs of work he obtained his arts degree. He then applied for a place in Huddersfield. He continued to work and study very hard and came out with a qualification to teach adults at further education level in accountancy. He started in Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire and then went to various posts in the Birmingham area. His two sons went to one of the first comprehensive schools in the country at Nottingham. They were not only very clever academically but also shone as all round sportsmen at swimming, tennis, basketball etc representing the county on several occasions. Alfred retained his love of sport and continued with his tennis and hockey. At 78 he was still playing hockey and captained a team. He once told me "Bob, I've reached the stage now that if they get past me I don't bother to chase them". I watched him playing on one occasion and if it was a question of one on one the younger player did not get past him. His (Alfred's) stick work was too clever and quick; his anticipation too was better than the very much younger player, For the past few years Alfred has been going to 'Golden Oldie' hockey events in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and USA and has been combining these with trekking in Nepal and white water rafting in both New Zealand and USA.

Alfred died in 1997 in Birmingham.

Margaret Esther Gibbs

3rd child of Othelia Aquino and Alfred Gibbs

From a letter sent to me from her brother, Robert.

Margaret Gibbs

My sister Margaret Esther (Baby May to the family) was born in Calcutta on 16th August 1920. At around four years of age she was very delicate - Bombay weather was unsuitable- so she was packed off as a boarder to a convent in Panchgani in the hills near Pune so we only saw her at Christmas (the end of the school year in India). I remember her again in 1933 when my

mother came to England finally. She was taken out of school in Walmer, Deal where she had been put in 1931 and she completed her education in St Joseph's College, Bradford where she shone academically. She also proved to be musically very talented and was in their choir which won many prizes at local festivals. When she left school she trained in typing and shorthand and was employed as a secretary, She succeeded wonderfully well. She was drafted into munitions during the war but was able to take up work with ENSA [Entertainments National Service Association: a British organisation providing entertainment for the armed forces during World War II] as a singer and dancer. Unfortunately she and mother fell out severely and around 1944 May left home. My last recollection of her was late in 1945 when I went to see her in Manchester where she had a senior post with ICI. From Manchester, she vanished into thin air until finally tracked down living in Capetown, South Africa. So far as I know she is still there. She wrote once to say that she was in a senior executive post and I do not doubt for one moment that she has proved to be a very successful career woman. I know that she had a brilliant brain and was master of three or four foreign languages which, allied to a strong personality, was bound to take her to the highest levels.

Sibyl Aquino

2nd child of Esther Desmier & Tomas Aquino

Sibyl was born in Bombay. She went to school in Colaba Woodhouse Rd Convent and later Poona Convent. She married Anthony Currie (originally from Liverpool) in Bombay and they had two children — one died as an infant, the other was killed during a bombing raid in WWII. In India, they lived in Watson's Annexe, Colaba, Bombay. Sibyl died just after her 102nd birthday in Orpington, Kent.

Laura Esther Aquino

3rd child of Esther Desmier & Tomas Aquino

Laura married Victor Weeks in Bombay in 1921. Victor worked for the newspaper The Times of India and eventually became a manager for the paper. Soon after the war the family immigrated to the UK. Laura died in 1997,

Laura's 100th birthday party
Standing are older sister Sybil & daughter Yvonne

The couple had four children all born in India. Alban, June, Yvonne (in photo) and Colleen. June lived in Capetown, South Africa for many years; Yvonne worked for the Food and Agriculture Organisation based in Switzerland and Colleen immigrated to Rhodesia. Both Yvonne and June lived close to their mother.

Mary Aquino

4th child of Esther Desmier & Tomas Aquino

Mary was born 1899-1901 in Sukkur, now Pakistan. She was a Doctor who was in charge of a hospital in Jaipur. She married a Mr. Nazareth. They had no children of their own but adopted two

boys, both (according to Laura) were princes of the Jaipur Maharajah. One was named Goanji. They both became Generals in the Indian Army in the 1939-45 war.

Tanjore

Tanjore is now officially known as Thanjavur. It is about 60 km, east of Tirruchirapalli. It was annexed from the Maratha kingdom by the British in 1799. The Britsh made it a regional administration centre and by 1871 the population was about 50,000. It is now more than 250,000. Thanjavur is an important centre of South Indian religion, art, and architecture and it is a UNESCO World Heritage site due to the many temples. It is known as the rice-bowl of Tamil Nadu.

Ootacamund

Officially Udhagamandalam but more commonly called Ooty it is in the Nilgiri Hills about 300 km west of Tiruchirapalli and at an elevation of 2,240 metres. It was made the summer capital of the Madras Presidency due to it's climate being much more acceptable to Europeans than down on the plain and officials used to administer the area from there during the hotter months. The British constructed a narrow gauge railway up from the plain that relied on a central rack and pinion for traction and braking. It has also now been added to the UNESCO world heritage listings. The Maharaja's summer palace is now a hotel.

Cuddalore

A coastal town about 200 km. North-East of Trichonopoly. Fort St. David was established there in 1690 as a British trading colony. It was the base for several conflicts with the French based in Pondicherry 25 km to the North.

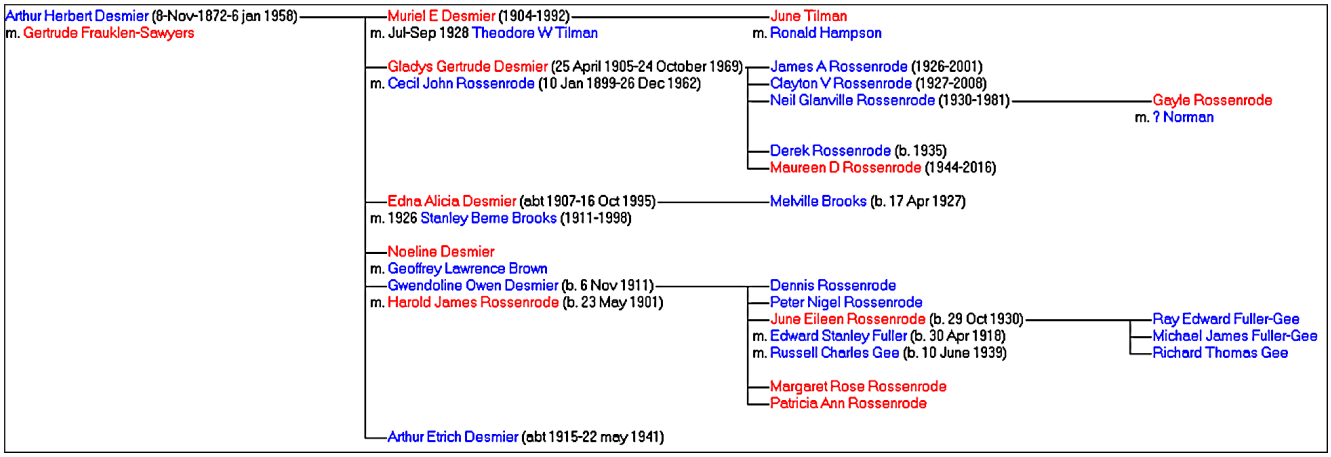
Tranquebar

Tranquebar was a port town and a Danish colony about 100 km. South of Pondicherry. A Jesuit Catholic congregation in Tranquebar predated the arrival of the Danes by several decades. This congregation descended from Tamil fishermen converted by Portuguese missionaries. In 1845 the Danish colonies of Serampore and Tranquebar were sold to the British

Sources: The Imperial Gazeteer of India (1909) accessed through dsal.uchicago.edu,
Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org).

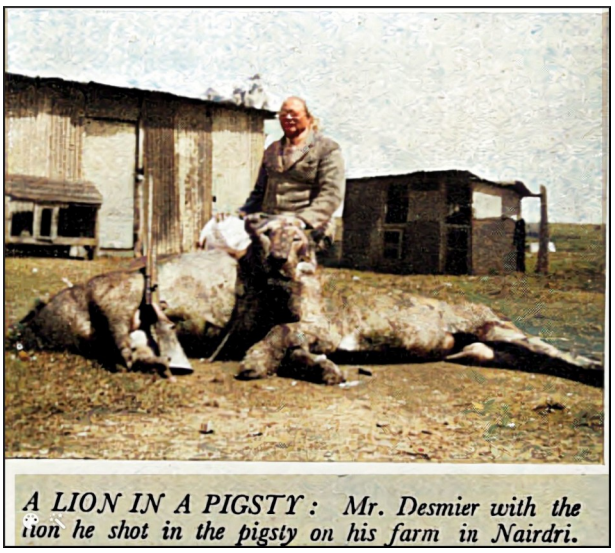
Chapter 12

ARTHUR HERBERT DESMIER & GERTRUDE FRAUKLEN-SAWYERS


Arthur Herbert Desmier (8-Nov-1872-6 jan 1958)
m. Gertrude Frauklen-Sawyers
Muriel E Desmier (1904-1992)
m. Jul-Sep 1928 Theodore W Tilman
June Tilman
m. Ronald Hampson
Gladys Gertrude Desmier (25 April 1905-24 October 1969)
m. Cecil John Rossenrode (10 Jan 1899-26 Dec 1962)
James A Rossenrode (1926-2001)
Clayton V Rossenrode (1927-2008)
Neil Glanville Rossenrode (1930-1981)
Gayle Rossenrode
m. ? Norman
Derek Rossenrode (b. 1935)
Maureen D Rossenrode (1944-2016)
Edna Alicia Desmier (abt 1907-16 Oct 1995)
m. 1926 Stanley Berne Brooks (1911-1998)
Melville Brooks (b. 17 Apr 1927)
Noeline Desmier
m. Geoffrey Lawrence Brown
Gwendoline Owen Desmier (b. 6 Nov 1911)
m. Harold James Rossenrode (b. 23 May 1901)
Dennis Rossenrode
Peter Nigel Rossenrode
June Eileen Rossenrode (b. 29 Oct 1930)
m. Edward Stanley Fuller (b. 30 Apr 1918)
m. Russell Charles Gee (b. 10 June 1939)
Ray Edward Fuller-Gee
Michael James Fuller-Gee
Richard Thomas Gee
Margaret Rose Rossenrode
Patricia Ann Rossenrode
Arthur Etrich Desmier (abt 1915-22 may 1941)

Arthur Herbert Desmier

Arthur was the 7th child of George Charles Desmier & Sarah


A LION IN A PIGSTY: Mr. Desmier with the lion he shot in the pigsty on his farm in Nairdri.

Source: *Illustrated Sporting & Dramatic News 21 January, 1938 London.*
Note: Nairdri is believed to be Nairiri, a town about 250 km. North of Nairobi
Colourised 2024

Like some of his other brothers, Arthur worked for a railway company in India and then went out to work on the development of the railway network in East Africa. Unlike most of his brothers he did not return to live in India. He married Gertrude Frauklen-Sawyers in Mombasa, Kenya. In 1922 they took leave to travel to England and at that time Gertrude was a clerk with the Ugandan Railways and Arthur was a carriage examiner. Arthur also played a role in WWII as there is a medal card under his name stating he was part of the Nairobi defence force. He also must have had a farm in Kenya (see photo above from a British magazine). Ships passenger records show that he visited UK at least three times between the wars. He died in Nairobi in 1958.

Arthur and Gertrude had six children. Most of the information on their children was passed to me by Gayle Norman, a grand-daughter of Gladys Gertrude Desmier and Michael Fuller-Gee a descendant of Gwendoline, their fifth daughter. I have a DNA match with Michael, see chapter 23.

Muriel Evelyn Desmier

1st child of Arthur Herbert Desmier & Gertrude

Muriel, born in Mombasa married Edward Tilman and they had a daughter, June, before divorcing about 1939. Many years later Muriel married Major Arthur Quarmby of the South African Defence Force. Muriel died in 1992 in Durban, South Africa.

Muriel E. Tilman (née Desmier)

Rear l to r Muriel Desmier, John Cecil Rossenrode, Gladys Gertrude (née Desmier) Neil Rossenrode, Clayton Rossenrode, Jimmy Rossenrode, and baby Derek Rossenrode photo taken 1936 (source: Gayle Norman, colourised 2024)

Gladys Gertrude Desmier

2nd child of Arthur Herbert Desmier & Gertrude

Gladys married Cecil John Rossenrode. Cecil John known to the family more by his middle name, John, was born in Saharanpur (about 200 km north of Delhi) in 1899. His father was an engine driver. A brother of Cecil, Dennis Vernon Rossenrode, was born in Kotri in 1908 and so the family may have known of the Desmier clan before they emigrated as some of the Desmier clan were living in Kotri around that time.

It is thought by Michael Fuller Gee that the family name had origins in Prussia. The Rossenrode family emigrated from India to Kenya about 1909 and ended up jointly running one of Nairobi's first general stores in Victoria street. Cecil joined the army and later joined the East African Shell Oil Co.

The Rossenrode general store. Image sourced from Nairobi City County website (colourised 2024)

Gladys and Cecil had five children all born in Kenya, sons James, Clayton, Neil and Derek and daughter Maureen. Neil and his older brother Clayton

joined the East African railways as apprentices. Neil rose to be a loco shed foreman before the family all immigrated to South Africa in the 1960s.

Gladys died in 1969 and Neil in 1981, both in Durban, South Africa.

Arthur Herbert Desmier and his wife Gertrude sitting front l to r: Stanley Brooks, Noeline Desmier, Edna Brooks (née Desmier), Elizabeth (wife of Clayton), John Cecil Rossenrode, Clayton Rossenrode, Gladys Rosenrode (née Desmier), standing in front Maureen Rossenrode
(source: Gayle Norman, colourised 2024)

Edna Elicia Desmier

3rd child of Arthur Herbert Desmier & Gertrude

Edna married Stanley Berne Brooks in 1926 in Nairobi. They had one child Melville. Edna died in Capetown in 1995 when she was about 88 year old. Stanley died there about three years later

Noeline Desmier

4th child of Arthur Herbert Desmier & Gertrude

Noel married Geoffrey Lawrence Brown, a professional "White Hunter". They divorced in the 1950's and she later married Albert Harris from England in 1957/8. They had no children. They moved to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Albert died there in 1999.

Gwendoline Desmier

5th child of Arthur Herbert Desmier & Gertrude

Gwen married Harold James Rossenrode, her brother in law. They had five children, Dennis, Peter Nigel, June Eileen, Margaret Rose and Patricia Ann. Michael Fuller Gee who I have a DNA match with is descended from their third child June Rossenrode.

Arthur Etrich Desmier

6th child of Arthur Herbert Desmier & Gertrude

Arthur Etrich Desmier was born about 1915. During WW2 he was a Stoker 1st Class aboard HMS Gloucester. Gloucester played minor roles in the Battle of Calabria in 1940 and the Battle of Cape Matapan in 1941. She was sunk by German dive bombers on 22 May 1941 during the Battle of Crete with the loss of 722 men out of a crew of 807. More information about the sinking is available on the internet (wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Gloucester_(62)).

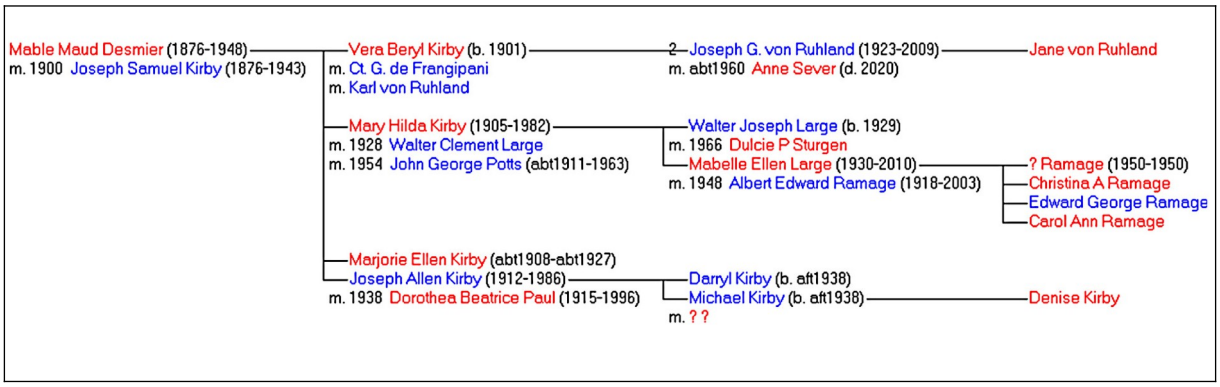
Young Arthur was one of those killed and his name is on the Plymouth Naval Memorial (panel 52, column 3).

Arthur E Desmier
source: G.Norman colourised 2024)

Map of East and South African counties showing cities relevant to the descendants of Arthur Herbert Desmier
Adapted from a map published in The Jacaranda Atlas, Jacaranda Press, Queensland 1980

Chapter 13

MABLE MAUD DESMIER & JOSEPH SAMUEL KIRBY


Mable Maud Desmier (1876-1948)
m. 1900 Joseph Samuel Kirby (1876-1943)
Vera Beryl Kirby (b. 1901)
m. Ct. G. de Frangipani
m. Karl von Ruhland
2 Joseph G. von Ruhland (1923-2009)
m. abt1960 Anne Sever (d. 2020)
Jane von Ruhland
Mary Hilda Kirby (1905-1982)
m. 1928 Walter Clement Large
m. 1954 John George Potts (abt1911-1963)
Walter Joseph Large (b. 1929)
m. 1966 Dulcie P Sturgen
Mabelle Ellen Large (1930-2010)
m. 1948 Albert Edward Ramage (1918-2003)
? Ramage (1950-1950)
Christina A Ramage
Edward George Ramage
Carol Ann Ramage
Marjorie Ellen Kirby (abt1908-abt1927)
Joseph Allen Kirby (1912-1986)
m. 1938 Dorothea Beatrice Paul (1915-1996)
Darryl Kirby (b. aft1938)
Michael Kirby (b. aft1938)
m. ? ?
Denise Kirby

Mable Maud Desmier

Mable was the 9th child of George Desmier & Sarah

Born 1876, Mable married Joseph Kirby in 1900. Joseph was an Engineer working on the building of a bridge over the river Indus between Hyderabad and Kotri.

Mable Maud Kirby (neé Desmier)

Mable looked after her grandson, Joe von Ruhland, after his mother and father had died. The following text is adapted from two letters that Joe sent me:

I can of course tell you a lot about Mable Maud who took me over after my father died. You know how children love 100%. That's how I felt for Mable and her husband Joseph Samuel Kirby. She was intelligent, lively, imaginative, educated, refined, very brave and utterly self-reliant. Like her husband, a true pioneering type. They were never happy in an urban environment. Quite at home in the space and utter silence of the Deccan with its vast star-lit sky which seems to breathe the warmth and nearness of the cosmic intelligence. Never lonely, you can feel that something up there knows about you and cares. My grandmother never really became used to electric lights. She preferred the hurricane lantern and the Petromax lamp, the vast up-country bungalows and the dogs. Most of the year people slept outdoors, the house bricks retaining the heat of the day. At one place she was the only white in a vast area where there were Dacoits (bandits), so she took to keeping chickens and shooting at the hawks that came after them, knowing that the whole area would come to know that she

was a lady who was very handy with a rifle. No trouble with Dacoits. When her husband was in Africa in World War I she slept with a revolver under her pillow - and she would have used it too! People never locked up at night. Everything was wide open. When she was in Ahmednagar there was a German internment camp opposite her bungalow. One night she was writing a letter, it was late and dark outside and she heard a rustle. She called out "Kaun hai?" (Who is it?) and the reply was"Sshh!" So, knowing no Indian would ever say "Sshh" she said in English "Come into the light where I can see you". It was a German internee who had escaped as his daughter who was in another camp (for women) far away was very ill. He could not get permission to visit her so he intended to make the journey somehow. What he wanted was some money for food and travel and having seen her with the children he knew that she would understand. She knew the Officers in charge of the camp and they used to call across (everything in India being "Open House") so they told her next day " German escaped last night". She expressed surprise. Sad to say they knew where he was going and caught him before he got there. Later, White Russian refugees who escaped over the mountains during the revolution were housed in that camp and she got to know some of them very well. They were returned to Vladivostok, something that shocked her deeply. She was never 100% pro-British after that. The Reds were waiting for them. It was known as repatriation. She could be very kind and she could be very tough. No whingeing. Things were black or white, no greys. No blurring of standards. Hobbies: she loved cooking and gardening, she used to make all the pickles and chutneys for the family.

Joseph Samuel Kirby

Mable met and married Joseph Samuel Kirby when he was a young engineer engaged on the construction of the Indus bridge at Hyderabad (Sindh). He went on to become the Bridge Engineer for the Great Indian Peninsular Railway. Joseph was big, strong, gentle and quiet, loved children and commanded respect and affection. He gave an impression of true goodness and lived his Christianity as his way of life. He was known as "Burra Sahib" indicating someone of importance. He was innovative and ahead of his time. In fact he started dry ice refrigeration in Bombay when it was unheard of in India. He owned a sand and gravel firm with two dredgers, 8 steel barges and two launches. He re-built every bridge destroyed by the retreating Germans in Tanganyika in WWI from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma to enable the army to advance; rejoined the Engineers in WWII by putting back his age from 65 to 55 but his heart gave out and he died in Service with Bridge Training School for the Burma War. He was awarded the Oak Leaf medal for mentioned in Dispatches.

Mable and Joseph had four children that survived infancy. Joe von Ruhland recalled that they also had three other daughters: one nicknamed Chucha died of meningitis shortly after her first birthday, the other two were either stillborn or died shortly after birth.

Vera Beryl Kirby

1st surviving child of Mable Maud Desmier & Joseph Kirby

Vera gained her M.D. in Bombay and then went to Vienna to do a post-graduate course in Obstetrics. My dad Terry remembered that Vera once sent his father some garlic bulbs from Italy as seed stock to grow on his plantation. At that time she was married to her first husband the Count Grassi de Frangipani. Her second marriage was to Austrian Karl von Ruhland with whom she had one son Joseph Gareth Wentworth (Joe, born Bombay 1923). A family story is that Karl was in fact a spy and deserted Vera when this came to light. The whole situation was an embarrassment to Vera's father Joseph Kirby who was a Colonel with the British army (Royal Engineers).

Joe supplied me with some information about his memories of childhood in India and photos of some of his relatives which I have included in this book. Joe went to school in Poona, Bombay and Jubbalpore. Joe left India for England in 1950. He married Ann Sever in Buckrose, Yorkshire in 1960. Joe and Ann had four children. He died in Ruislip, Yorkshire in 2009.

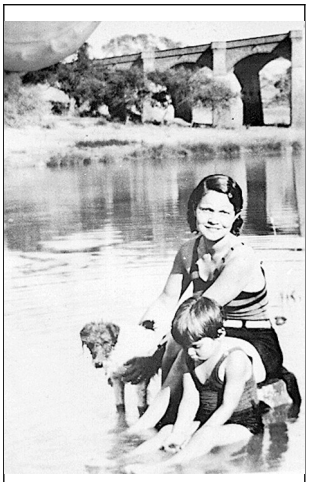
Mary Hilda Kirby

2nd surviving child of Mable Maud Desmier & Joseph Kirby

Mary was born in Agra (1905) Joe von Ruhland wrote the following to me about Mary:

Mary's nickname was Loo. She was the one in the family who was always getting in to trouble. One tale was of her dressed up in her Sunday best before church when she decided to cool off under the tap while waiting for her mother who found her dripping wet. Another time she was locked in the larder room where she quietly had her fill of chillies and hot pickles before she called out "Can I come out now?" When older Loo was taken to Italy for two years by her mother to train her voice for opera singing.

Joe remembered Loo singing the High Mass at the church in Ahmednagar as it had never been sung before.



Mary Hilda Kirby

Mary married Walter Large, a soldier with the British army, in Jubbalpore They had two children but the marriage was short lived, In 1954 she married John George Potts in Calcutta. After partition Mary and John immigrated to the U.K, and then New Zealand. John died in 1963 and Mary twenty years later, both in Onehunga, New Zealand.

Walter Joseph Wentworth Large

1st child of Mary Hilda Kirby & Walter Large

Walter was born in 1929 when the family was in Poona. The family immigrated to the U.K. It seems as though young Walter did not immigrate to New Zealand with either his parents or with his sister's family. He got into trouble with the law at least a couple of times. In 1946 when he was 17, he was described as a Royal marine Bugler who stole a motorbike to get back to barracks. The event was described as a stupid escapade in the paper (Thanet advertiser & Echo, 23 August) and was dismissed on payment of costs. In 1951 he was sentenced to three years for a housebreaking offence in the Suffolk Quarter sessions. In 1952 he absconded from the Chelmsford prison but later gave himself up. In 1961 he was described as a 32 year old window cleaner from Skegness when he was arrested on a charge of housebreaking (Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph 4/8/1961 p1). Walter married Dulcie P

Sturgen at Leeds in 1966. No further information has been found for either Walter or Dulcie or any children that they may have had.

Mabelle Ellen Marjorie Large

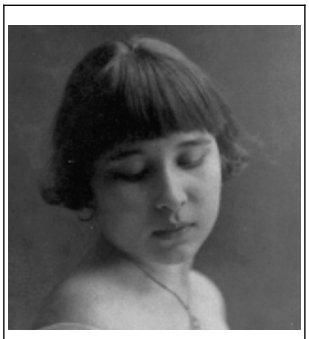
2nd child of Mary Hilda Kirby & Walter Large

Mabelle was born in 1930 in Ahmednagar. The family immigrated to England and Mabelle married Scotsman Albert Edward Ramage in Birmingham in 1948.The couple had three children, Christina, Edward and Carol before immigrating to New Zealand. Albert and Mabelle both died in Auckland.

Marjorie Ellen Kirby

3rd surviving child of Mable Maud Desmier & Joseph Kirby

Marjorie died as a teenager whilst swimming in the river at Jhansi. Apparently she got into trouble by stepping into a deep hole that the locals dug in the river bed so that they would be able to still get water when the river stopped flowing in the dry season.



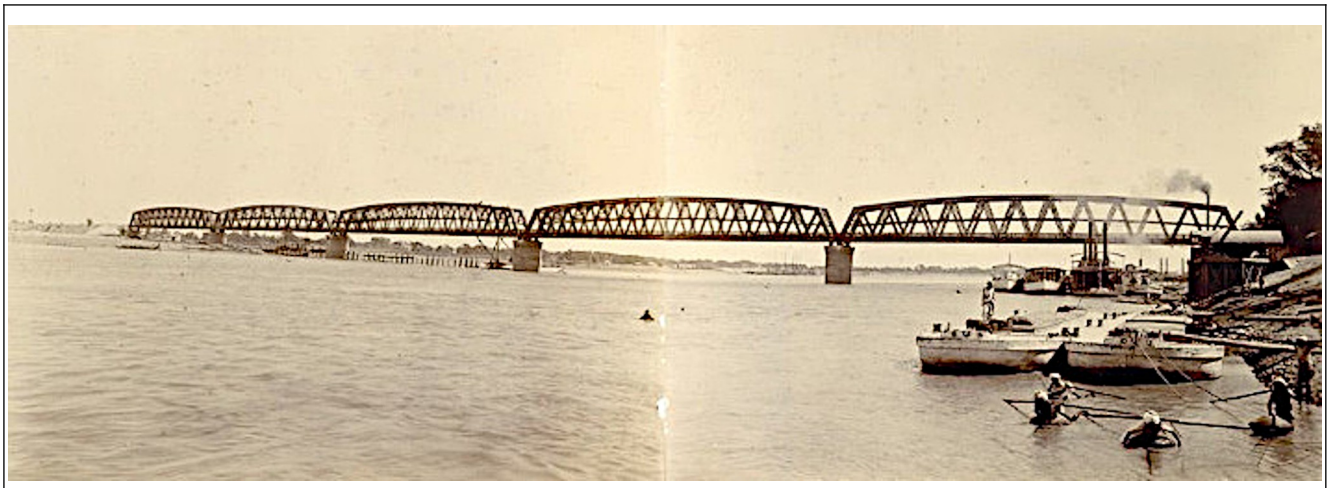
Marjorie Ellen Kirby

Joseph Allen Kirby

4th surviving child of Mable Maud Desmier & Joseph Kirby

Joseph, born in Ahmednagar, married Dorothea Beatrice Paul in 1938 when he was 26 years old. They had two sons and later immigrated to New Zealand. Joseph died in 1986 and Dorothea about ten years later. I have DNA matches with three members of this family (although specific families are unclear) see chapter 23.

Joseph Allen Kirby



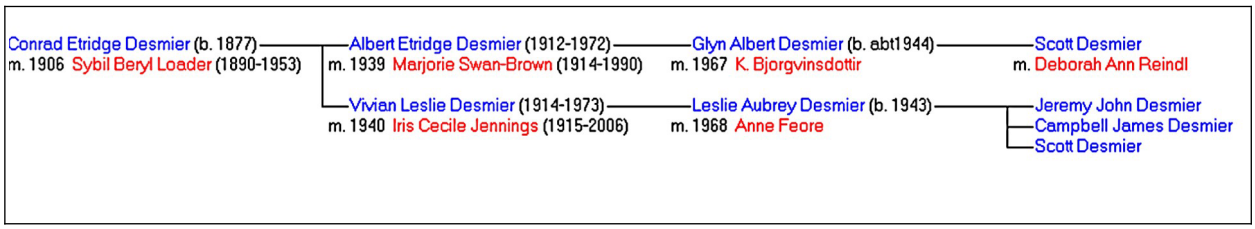
Old bridge over the Indus between Kotri and Hyderabad that Joseph Kirby worked on as a junior engineer (source: British Library)

Poona

Located about 200km south-east of Bombay, Poona is 550 metres above sea level and has a climate agreeable to Europeans. The British first established a presence in the area in 1802 and by 1818 it had become the monsoon headquarters of the Bombay Presidency government. The area was known for the manufacture of cloth and gold and silver jewellery. The British established arms and ammunition factories and a brass foundry. A railway connecting Poona to Bombay was opened in 1858. The population in 1901 was 153,000 including about 8,000 Christians. Present day population is over 6 million.

Chapter 14

CONRAD ETRIDGE DESMIER & SYBIL BERYL LOADER


Conrad Etridge Desmier (b. 1877)
m. 1906 Sybil Beryl Loader (1890-1953)
Albert Etridge Desmier (1912-1972)
m. 1939 Marjorie Swan-Brown (1914-1990)
Glyn Albert Desmier (b. abt1944)
m. 1967 K. Bjorgvinsdottir
Scott Desmier
m. Deborah Ann Reindl
Vivian Leslie Desmier (1914-1973)
m. 1940 Iris Cecile Jennings (1915-2006)
Leslie Aubrey Desmier (b. 1943)
m. 1968 Anne Feore
Jeremy John Desmier
Campbell James Desmier
Scott Desmier

Conrad Etridge Desmier

Conrad was the 10th child of George Charles Desmier & Sarah

Conrad is known to have gone to work on the Kenya and Uganda railways at the same time as his younger brother William. Like William he also returned to India. In 1906 when he was 28 years old he married 16 year old Sybil Beryl Loader at St Thomas Church, Howrah Calcutta. Both Conrad and Beryl lived at the railway colony at Tikiapara about 10 km east of Howrah. Conrad was an engine driver for the Bengal & Nagpur (B & N) Railway. They had two children, Albert and Vivian.

Albert Etridge Desmier

1st son of Conrad Etridge Desmier & Sybil

Albert was born in Bilaspur in 1912 when his father was based there as an engine driver for the B & N railway company.

Albert was known to be a keen rugby player in his youth. In 1939 he married Marjorie Aleithia Swan-Brown who was two years younger than him. At that time they were in Kharagpur, an important railway junction town about 100 km west of Calcutta. Albert's occupation at this time was not recorded but when they immigrated to England in 1949, on the passenger list he was stated to be a boilermaker and Marjorie was a stenographer. With them was their only son, Glyn Albert, recorded as being five years old (no birth extract found). The family settled in the area west of London. In 1967 Glyn married Kirstin Johanna Bjorgvinsdottir originally from Iceland, they had one son whose family live in England.

Vivian Leslie Desmier

2nd son of Conrad Etridge Desmier & Sybil

Vivian was also born in Bilaspur. He joined the Calcutta Police Force and in 1940 married Iris Cecile Jennings. They had one son Leslie Aubrey Desmier (b 1943) before emigrating to Sydney, Australia in 1947. Iris described Vivian as a tall man who had wavy hair and he was a keen rugby player like his brother. Iris was also a keen sports-person and was the All India Champion for Athletics in her youth. The family immigrated to Sydney, Australia in 1947. Initially Vivian worked for Dunlop and later became a house detective for a hardware store. Vivian and Iris separated after moving to live in Victoria. Vivian died in 1973. Iris remarried in 1994 to Rodner Allsop. She died in Wangaratta, Victoria in 2006.

Leslie worked in real estate in Victoria for some time before moving to Wangaratta, Victoria where he had some land and raised cattle, sheep and horses.

Bengal Nagpur Railway Company

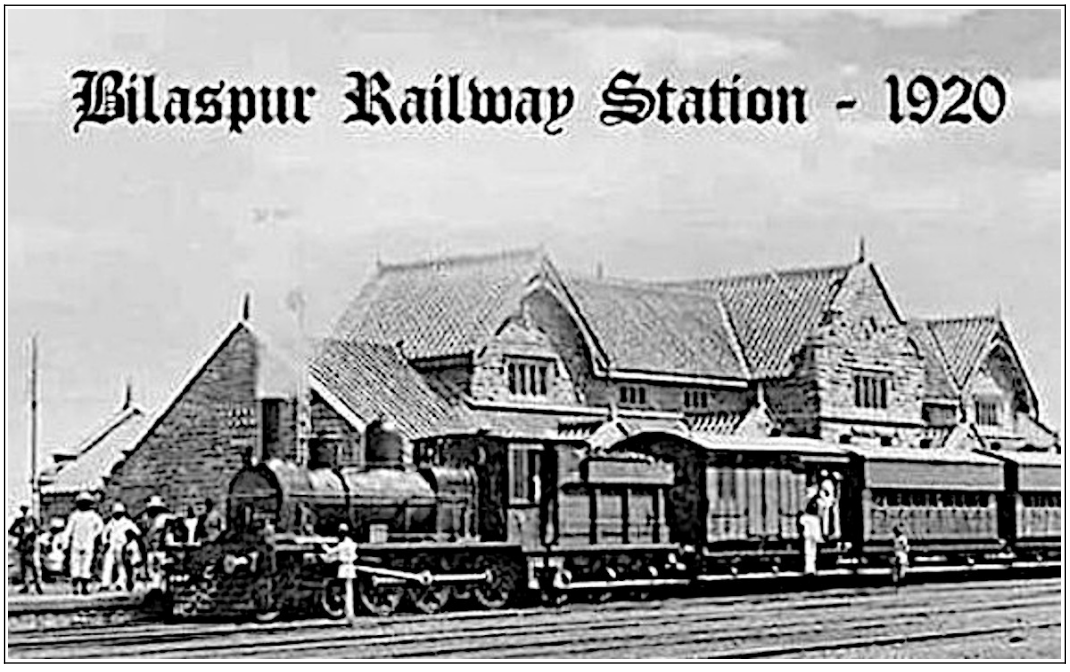
The Bengal Nagpur Railway was one of the companies that pioneered development of the railways in eastern and central India. It was succeeded first by Eastern Railway and subsequently by South Eastern Railway.

The opening of the Mumbai-Thane line in 1853 marked the beginning of railways in India. Extension of the railway network commenced throughout the country. On the north-eastern side of Mumbai, the Great Indian Peninsular Railway line was extended up to Bhusawal and then split in two. While one track led to Nagpur, the other to Jabalpur to connect with the East Indian Railway line from Allahabad to Jabalpur, thereby connecting Mumbai and Kolkata. The great famine of 1878 provided an opportunity for the construction of 150 km long meter gauge link called the Nagpur Chhattisgarh Railway in 1882 connecting Nagpur with Rajnandgaon.

The Bengal Nagpur Railway was formed in 1887 for the purpose of upgrading the Nagpur Chhattisgarh Line and then extending it via Bilaspur to Asansol, in order to develop a shorter Howrah-Mumbai route than the one via Allahabad. The Nagpur Chhattisgarh Railway was owned by the provincial government. The Nagpur Chhattisgarh Railway was purchased from Great Indian Peninsula Railway by Bengal Nagpur Railway in 1888, and was converted to broad gauge. The Bengal Nagpur Railway main line from Nagpur to Asansol was opened for goods traffic on 1 February 1891. It was only after Kharagpur was linked from the west and the south that it was connected to Howrah in 1900.

Although the Bengal Nagpur Railway was not a part of original design to connect major points in the subcontinent with a network of railways, it was instrumental in developing a shorter, and hence more popular, route from Howrah to Mumbai and the trunk route from Howrah to Chennai.

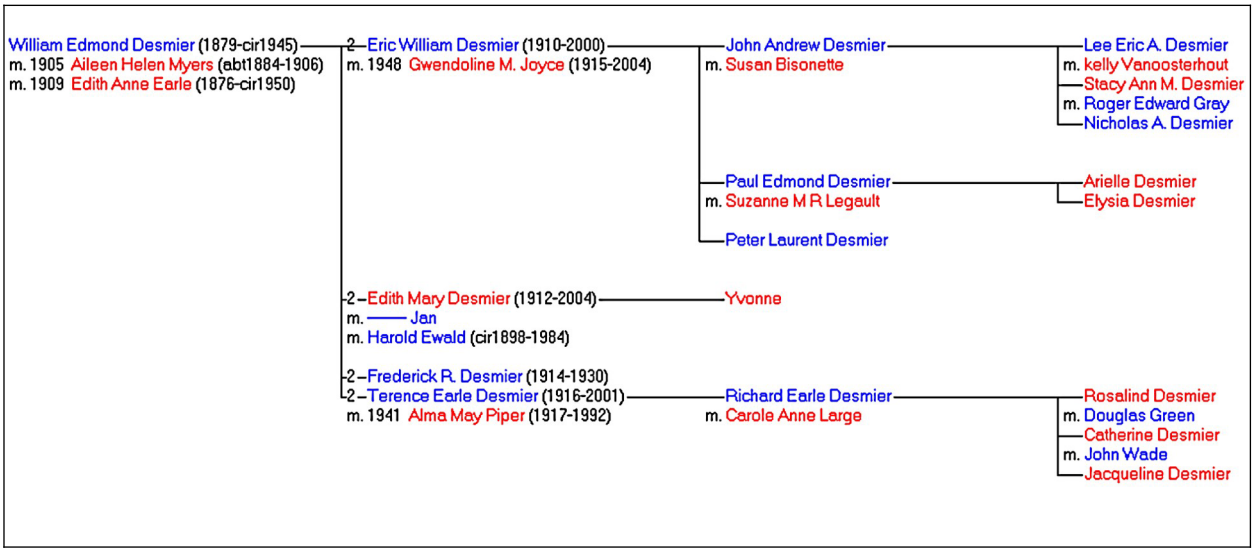
source: Wikipaedia (December 2019)



Bilaspur Railwy Station (built1890) from an old postcard

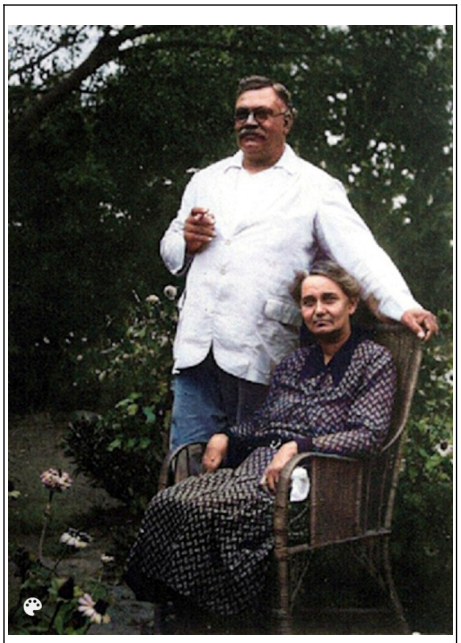
Chapter 15

WILLIAM EDMOND DESMIER & EDITH ANNE EARLE



William Edmond Desmier

William was the 11th & youngest child of George Charles Desmier & Sarah



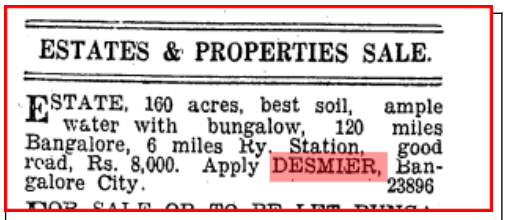
William Edmond and Edith Desmier (colourised photo)

William grew up in the age when development of India's great rail-road system was at its peak and it was understandable that, like so many other Anglo-Indians of the time, he would seek employment with one or the other of the many railway companies that were then in existence. At the age of 23 he was working as a fireman for the Indian and Peninsular Railway Co and was based at Rajhanwali, a busy railway junction in the Punjab on the line from Karachi to Delhi. It was at this time that he met and married his first wife Aileen. They were married at Ferozapur, also in the Punjab. Unfortunately Aileen died about 18 months after their marriage. Following her death William went to Kenya in East Africa. It is unknown whether he went with his brother Conrad or separately however both worked on the railways in Africa and both later returned to India. Older brothers Arthur and Charles were also in Africa.

By 1909 William was back in India and working as an engine driver based in Calcutta. It was here, when he was an engine driver, that he met and married his second wife, Edith Anne Earle. Edith was a school teacher. They had four children Eric, Edith, Frederick and Terence. Shortly after their marriage William qualified as an Engineer after completing further studies in Calcutta. This career change was to signal the start of many moves for the family as William went from job to job. Eric remembered his mother complaining about all the moves and wonders whether his father didn't work for just about every railway company in India at the time as well as having several other jobs such as with the Public

Works Department. Many of the postings were in the south of the sub-continent but he also worked at Allahabad and Agra. At Bangalore he was engineer in charge of the Loco Shed where they maintained and repaired the steam engines. My dad, Terry told me that it was at this posting that his father was demoted. The Governor of the railway company came to Bangalore on a tour and when he was due to leave the replacement engine that was to pull his train was not ready as it had not developed sufficient head of steam. As William was ultimately responsible, it was him that had to be on the firing line. As a result the family was moved to Arsikere. It was here that William bought a plantation called Bokasagra near Kadur.

When a cholera plague hit Arsikere the family lived in two railway carriages for about six months to isolate themselves from the disease. Later they moved back to Bangalore where William was engineer in charge of the Loco shed again. From Bangalore they moved to Gooty and then Pakala living for about four years in each place. In Gooty and Pakala Terry remembered that his father had his own railway carriage to take him wherever he needed to go.



ESTATES & PROPERTIES SALE.

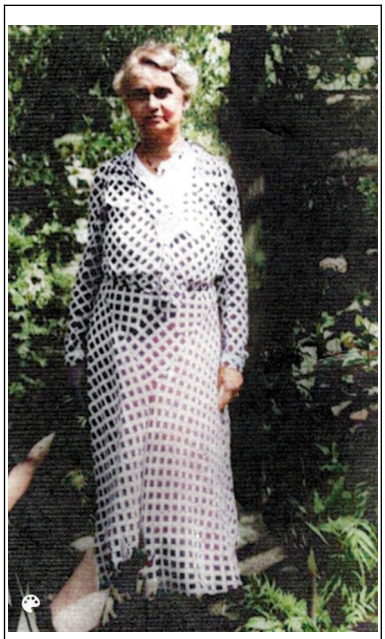
ESTATE, 160 acres, best soil, ample water with bungalow, 120 miles Bangalore, 6 miles Ry. Station, good road, Rs. 8,000. Apply DESMIER, Bangalore City. 23896

Advert inserted in "The Times of India" 10 October 1930

William had several hobbies beside looking after his plantation(s). He was a keen breeder of poultry and often got a mention in the Indian press for winning prizes in local shows. He also liked staffordshire bull terrier dogs. He was a tall and heavy man and Terry remembered one of his feats of strength was to pull a railway carriage along with a rope. He is reputed to have nearly killed a man who once referred to Edith as a woman instead of a lady!

William and Edith travelled to England in September 1938 and joined Terry who had emigrated several years earlier to study wireless engineering. They found the cold and damp English winter too much to cope with and didn't like having to live without servants so they returned to India in March 1939.

Back in India William built two bungalows in Whitefields, a developing Anglo-Indian colony near Bangalore. He sold one and they lived in the other. He died in 1945 and is buried in the catholic cemetery in Bangalore.



Edith Anne Desmier (née Earle) photo colourised

William & Edith with two of their children Edith and Terry (photo colourised)

William outside their newly built house near Whitefields, Bangalore circa 1940 (photo colourised)

Eric William Samuel Desmier

1st child of William Edmond Desmier & Edith

Eric Desmier (photo colourised)

Eric was born in Calcutta. He went to Bishop Cotton School in Bangalore and then St Joseph's in Darjeeling. I remember my father telling me that he was beaten by one of the schoolmasters because he told them he would not call them father as he was not his father.

Eric wrote to me that he had typhoid twice. The first time was when he ran out of water when he was out hunting and he drank from a stream. The second time was when he and his school room-mate (Flanagan) fancied some spicy food. They went out and brought some from a street vendor. They both got typhoid. Flanagan died and they read the last rites to Eric. He was delirious and apparently gave the hospital staff a hard time running all over the hospital before he recovered. His father said that he should go to England where it would be safer for him and so he was sent to University

Following graduation with a degree in civil engineering. Eric returned to India and worked for a railway company. Eric travelled a lot for his job and had his own carriage for accommodation that was attached to trains as required. He married Gwendoline Margarette Pointer at St Teresa's church, Calcutta in 1948. In 1952 they decided to emigrate to Canada. By that time they had two boys, John and Paul, as well as Gwen's daughter, Lynley, from an earlier marriage. Another son, Peter, was born in Canada.

Gwen on her 70th birthday

In Canada Eric worked for Alcan for many years. When he was about 60 years old he successfully

studied and gained a Masters degree from McGill University in Montreal to encourage his children to pursue their own studies.

Edith Mary Desmier

2nd child of William Edmond Desmier & Edith

Edith immigrated to England and subsequently Canada then USA where she married Harold Ewald, a retired Electrical Engineer and lived in Ocean Grove, New Jersey where they kept a guest house. Edith died in Sun City, Florida April 2004.

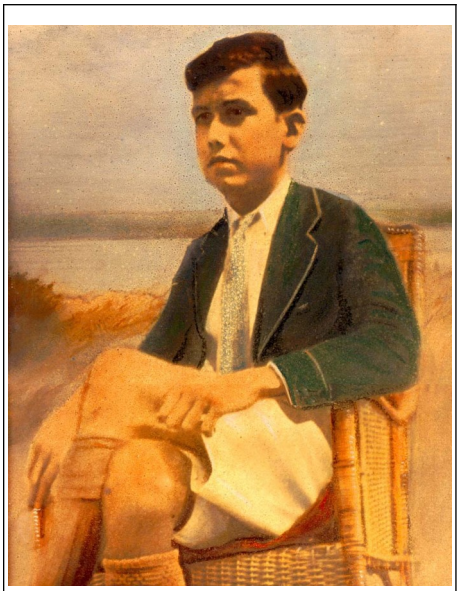
Postcard of Edith & Harold's guesthouse Ocean Grove, New Jersey

Edith and Harold Ewald 1970

Frederick Richard Earle Desmier

3rd child of William Edmond Desmier & Edith

Frederick, born 1914 in Calcutta, died in Bangalore when 15 years old of Cerebral Malaria. My father, Terry, believed that the doctor gave him too much morphine to treat a fever and that resulted in his death. Fred was buried in the Hosur Rd Protestant Cemetery, Bangalore.



Frederick Richard Earle Desmier (painted photo)

Fred in Lal Bagh park, Bangalore Taken by his sister not long before his death (colourised)

Frederick's grave, Protestant cemetery, Hosur Rd., Bangalore photo taken by a FIBIS member

Terence Earle Desmier

4th child of William Edmond Desmier & Edith

Terry with his father 1929, Gooty

Terence Earle Desmier

Terry or Ted as he was known to his brother Eric and sister Edith (because of the initials of his name) was born in New Delhi at a time when his father was working as an engineer for the Public Works Department. Around about the time of his birth his father was involved with the construction of a water supply facility for Agra. Most of Terry's schooling was undertaken at Bishop Cotton School in Bangalore while his father worked for the railways in and around that part of India. He was a boarder at the school for some of his time there.

He told many stories of his time in India and school holidays on the land that his father owned in Bookasaga near Bangalore (now called (Bukkasagara)and chikkmalagur (now chikkamalaguru) and how he used to catch the train to the nearest station, Kadur, at the end of school term He recalled times shooting Deer and Tigers with his two brothers. This tale was confirmed in a letter to me from his brother Eric.

....We sat up for tigers once or twice. Our brother Fred was alive at the time. The villagers wanted it killed as it was getting their cattle. We were sitting in our trees either side of the path and the tiger just ran across. I turned to tell some villagers to get away from the area and when I looked back the tiger was crossing a small open patch of jungle. I remember checking to see if the men had gone and wondering what would happen if the tiger was only wounded. By the time I looked back the tiger had

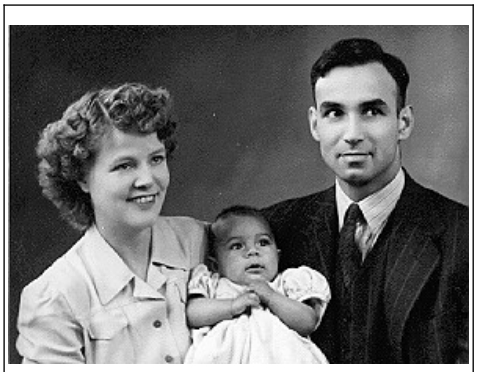
gone. I took aim at the spot where I thought it would reappear and then I heard your dad and Fred's shots. I may have been 14 so your dad would have been 8 or 9. We used to collect deer antlers from tiger kills and used to kill and skin pythons etc.

Terry was a good swimmer at school and in 1933 he was presented with a silver cup for winning every swimming and diving event in the senior school sports. He left India in August 1934 at the age of 18. This was a time of much unrest in India with a strong push for independence for the country and no doubt he and his parents thought that there would be more opportunities for him in England. He travelled by ship from India to Venice in Italy and then by train through Europe to Belgium and by ferry across the Channel to England. He went to England to study as a ship's wireless operator and passed his exams for a position with Marconi in December 1935. Marconi was the company that at the time supplied radio operators to the shipping lines. On qualifying, he found that there was a waiting list of about six to nine months for positions on ships and so he decided to do further study at the British Radio Engineering College. After graduating he worked for several radio and/or electrical companies, the last of which was with the Boosey & Hawkes Electric Organ Company who he was with for about two years. During one of his holiday breaks he rode a bicycle to lands End and up to Scotland.

On the day that war was declared Terry joined the Royal Air Force. He was appointed as a Corporal immediately which he always said was because he could read and write! He went to their college at Colwyn Bay in Wales and then Clapham in London. He wasn't allowed to fly as he had high blood pressure when he had his medical. He was stationed as a Wireless Operator at Hendon, London (Googe St.), Leighton (Bedfordshire), Whitehall, Cardington and Cranwell.

In 1940 he married Alma May Piper a Londoner who he met whilst walking in Hyde Park. Alma was born in 1917 and her family was still living at 120 Seymour Place, Marylebone in London where Alma was born. They were to stay living at this address until after the war. Alma worked as a milliner before getting married. After the war Terry continued to work in telecommunications and joined Cable & Wireless which was subsequently nationalised becoming part of the Post Office and later it became part of British Telecom. His work was involved with maintaining the overseas telecommunications equipment which in those days was mainly telegram services.

About 1946 they moved out to Essex where they purchased a house on 3 acres of land. Terry grew vegetables and raised pigs and poultry, continuing to travel each day by train into London for work. Alma's mother, Alice, made the move with them. It was here that I was born in 1948. They wanted to name me Ricky but the vicar at the christening ceremony said that it was not a real name and so I had to be called Richard. I was always called Ricky though.



Terry & Alma with Ricky (Richard)

Terry on the farm with Ricky (photo about 1956)

In the mid 1950's, redevelopment in the area meant that the government was going to compulsorily purchase much of the hobby farm for road construction so they decided to sell up. They moved to Brighton where they stayed with Alma's aunt Lillian while they looked for another property with land that would be within commuting distance of London.

After about a year in Brighton they settled for a farm of 40 acres in Burgess Hill, about 40 miles south of London where they reared beef cattle, kept laying poultry in battery cages and raised turkeys for the Christmas market. They rented the land but owned all the sheds and the house on the property. Alma used to do a lot of work feeding the young calves and collecting and grading the eggs when Terry was at work in London. Alma suffered from rheumatoid arthritis for many years and eventually the illness got so severe that she was unable to do much work on the farm. They made the decision to give up the farm and moved into a new housing estate about 2 km away. After about 10 years here they moved to Hurstpierpoint, a small village about 10 km towards Brighton from Burgess Hill.

After leaving the farm Terry rented an allotment from the local council where he grew all their own vegetables and fruit such as strawberries and raspberries supplying both themselves and their friends and neighbours with fresh produce.

Alma died in 1992 and shortly after this Terry made the decision to immigrate to Australia to live near me and my family. He purchased a block of land across the road from our place and lived with us while a house was built. He packed most of his English furniture into a container and brought it with him to Australia. This made moving into a new house much easier, having all his familiar furniture about him. He was seventy eight when he was granted permission to immigrate to Australia. A condition attached to his migration permit was that he was not allowed to seek employment!

Terry enjoyed his time living in Angle Vale. He had a ½ acre block on which he quickly established fruit trees, flower beds and a veggie patch. He brought Alma's ashes with him from the UK and had them placed in the local graveyard and every week went up to visit her grave and replace the flowers with fresh ones from his garden. He led an active life in his later years recovering well from a heart attack and a stroke. He was also receiving medications for prostate cancer and to prevent another stroke. His undoing was a slip in the kitchen which caused him to bump into the wall or some furniture which resulted in a hairline fracture to his hip. The pain was so bad that he decided to have a hip replacement but in recovery he had another stroke from which he could not recover and he died on 8th August 2001 at St Andrews hospital in Adelaide South Australia. His ashes are placed in the Angle Vale cemetery with those of Alma.

Terry and Alma at Hurstpierpoint on the occasion of their 50th Wedding Anniversary

Bishop Cotton School Swimming championship 1933 awarded to Terry

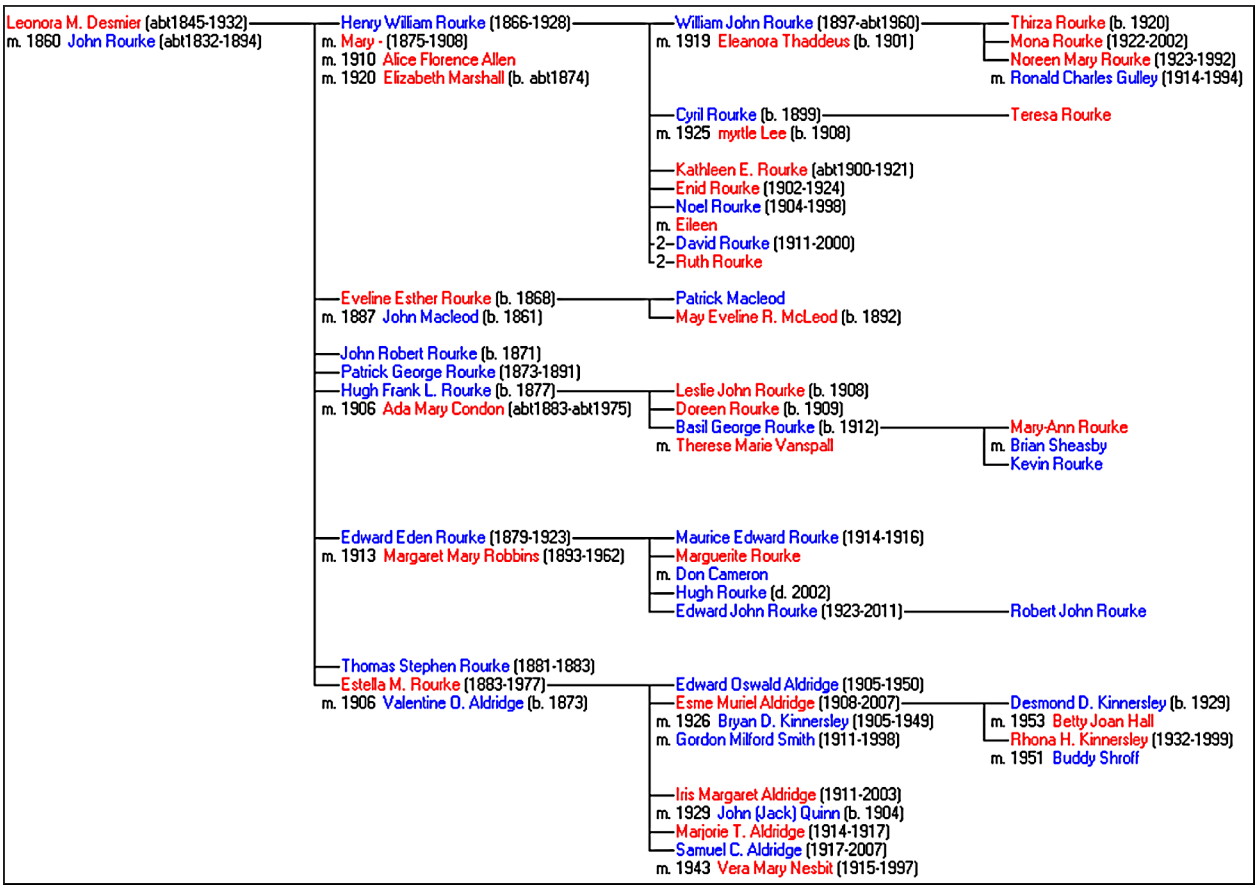
Boosey & Hawkes Organ Company
Terry at rear

Sukkur looking towards the fort. A watercolour by William Robeert Houghton, 1879
source: British Library

Multan Cantonment railway station.
photo wikipedia commons 2011

Chapter 16

LEONORA MARGARET DESMIER & JOHN ROURKE


Leonora M. Desmier (abt1845-1932)
m. 1860 John Rourke (abt1832-1894)
Henry William Rourke (1866-1928)
m. Mary - (1875-1908)
m. 1910 Alice Florence Allen
m. 1920 Elizabeth Marshall (b. abt1874)
William John Rourke (1897-abt1960)
m. 1919 Eleanora Thaddeus (b. 1901)
Thirza Rourke (b. 1920)
Mona Rourke (1922-2002)
Noreen Mary Rourke (1923-1992)
m. Ronald Charles Gulley (1914-1994)
Cyril Rourke (b. 1899)
m. 1925 myrtle Lee (b. 1908)
Teresa Rourke
Kathleen E. Rourke (abt1900-1921)
Enid Rourke (1902-1924)
Noel Rourke (1904-1998)
m. Eileen
2-David Rourke (1911-2000)
2-Ruth Rourke
Eveline Esther Rourke (b. 1868)
m. 1887 John Macleod (b. 1861)
Patrick Macleod
May Eveline R. McLeod (b. 1892)
John Robert Rourke (b. 1871)
Patrick George Rourke (1873-1891)
Hugh Frank L. Rourke (b. 1877)
m. 1906 Ada Mary Condon (abt1883-abt1975)
Leslie John Rourke (b. 1908)
Doreen Rourke (b. 1909)
Basil George Rourke (b. 1912)
m. Therese Marie Vanspall
Mary-Ann Rourke
m. Brian Sheasby
Kevin Rourke
Edward Eden Rourke (1879-1923)
m. 1913 Margaret Mary Robbins (1893-1962)
Maurice Edward Rourke (1914-1916)
Marguerite Rourke
m. Don Cameron
Hugh Rourke (d. 2002)
Edward John Rourke (1923-2011)
Robert John Rourke
Thomas Stephen Rourke (1881-1883)
Estella M. Rourke (1883-1977)
m. 1906 Valentine O. Aldridge (b. 1873)
Edward Oswald Aldridge (1905-1950)
Esme Muriel Aldridge (1908-2007)
m. 1926 Bryan D. Kinnersley (1905-1949)
m. Gordon Milford Smith (1911-1998)
Desmond D. Kinnersley (b. 1929)
m. 1953 Betty Joan Hall
Rhona H. Kinnersley (1932-1999)
m. 1951 Buddy Shroff
Iris Margaret Aldridge (1911-2003)
m. 1929 John (Jack) Quinn (b. 1904)
Marjorie T. Aldridge (1914-1917)
Samuel C. Aldridge (1917-2007)
m. 1943 Vera Mary Nesbit (1915-1997)

Leonora Margaret Desmier

Leonora was the 4th child of George Charles Desmier and Marianna

Leonora was born about 1845 according to her marriage extract. At 16 years old she married 28 y.o. John Rourke, a local clerk, in Hyderabad. This was just 10 days before her older brother George married Sarah at the same church. By the time their son Henry was born they had moved to Karachi and John's profession was recorded as a constable. At the time of birth of their daughter, Eveline, they were in Sukkur but when their third child, John, was born they had moved back to Hyderabad and John was working as an assistant jailer. The couple went on to have at least five more children, all of these born in Sukkur. When their son Patrick was born in 1873 John's profession was recorded as "Inspector of Nuisance" which presumably is a position higher than a constable. By 1881 when son Thomas was born he was a clerk again and worked at the Railway Hospital in Sukkur. When he died of pneumonia in 1894 he was described as "late of the Telegraph Dept." Leonora died in Karachi in 1932 when she was 90 years old. The cause of her death was recorded as "Senile decay". I have DNA match with this family through Virginia Gulley (see chapter 23).

Henry William Rourke

1st child of Leonora Margaret Desmier and John Rourke

Henry was baptised in the Holy Trinity Church in Karachi in 1866. His cousin William Arthur McLean (4th son of Isabella Desmier and John McLean) had been baptised there five days previously.

Des Kinnersley, a descendant of Henry's sister Estella told me of some names of children of Henry and the fact that he was married three times. I have managed to confirm the dates of his marriage to Alice (1910, Sukkur) and to Elizabeth (1920, Rawalpindi) and the age and death of his first wife May (1908), from available records but have found little information on the children. The birth years of William and Cyril have been estimated from marriage extracts and Kathleen is believed to have died in Lahore when she was 21 years old (on death extract - *daughter of HW Rourke foreman, NW railway*).

Eveline Esther Rourke

2nd child of Leonora Margaret Desmier & John Rourke

Born in Sukkur, when she was 19 Eveline married 21 year old railway guard John McLeod in Sukkur. Des Kinnersley believed that one son was named Patrick but the only record of children that I have been able to find is for May Eveline Rourke McLeod who was born in Sukkur in 1892.

John Robert Rourke

3rd child of Leonora Margaret Desmier & John Rourke

John was born in Hyderabad in 1871 and at this time his father was an assistant jailer. No doubt working under Leonora's father George.

Patrick George Stewart Rourke

4th child of Leonora Margaret Desmier & John Rourke

Patrick died in Sukkur of pneumonia in 1891 when he was 17 years old. No information regarding where he was baptised has been found.

Hugh Frank Leslie Rourke

5th child of Leonora Margaret Desmier & John Rourke

Although Hugh's family were living in Sukkur, he was baptised in Kotri about three months after his birth. This was probably to celebrate the event with Leonora's family who lived in Kotri which is on the other side of the river to Hyderabad where her father was Governor of the jail.

Hugh was a 29 year old boilermaker for the NW railways when he married his cousin Ada Mary Condon in Multan.

More information on the Condon family and their children follows in chapter 17.

Edward Eden Rourke

6th child of Leonora Margaret Desmier & John Rourke

In 1913 Edward, then 33 years old, married 20 year old Margaret May Robbins at the Assumption church, Sukkur. At the time Edward was a pump inspector. A descendant, Kat Rourke, told me some information about his family as follows:

There were four children; Maurice Edward John Rourke born 1914 died 1916, Sukkur; Hugh Terrance Rourke, whose family immigrated to Canada; Margerite Lenora Rourke married Don Cameron. She died in Ottowa, Canada 2011 and Edward John Rourke born Karachi 1922 married

Beryl Jean Mable in NSW 1950. Beryl died 2002 and Edward died 2011 both in Sydney, NSW They had descendants that now live in both Australia and USA.

Edward died in 1923 in Sukkur. At the time he was a foreman with the NW Railways. cause of death was a liver tumor according to the extract although a family legend is that he died in a bicycle accident.

Thomas Stephen Rourke

7th child of Leonora Margaret Desmier & John Rourke

Thomas was 15 months old when he died in 1883. At the time his father was a clerk in Sukkur.

Estella Margaret Rourke

8th child of Leonora Margaret Desmier & John Rourke

In 1906, 26 year old 'Stella married twice widowed 30 year old Valentine Oswald Aldridge a driver with the NW railways. They had five children, most of the information about the children was given to me by descendant Des Kinnersley:

Edward Oswald Aldridge born 1905, Sukkur, died 1950 Karachi
Esme Muriel Rourke Aldridge In 1926 she married Brian Dermot Kinnersley and they had two children. Esme died in San Francisco, USA in 2007.
Iris Margaret Aldridge . She married Jack Quin and died in Romford, Essex in 2003.
Marjorie Theodora Aldridge Marjorie died when about three years old of diphtheria. Samuel Carlton Rourke Aldridge Samuel married Vera Mary Nesbit in 1943. He died in 2007 in Romford, Essex.

Sukkur

Modern Sukkur, or New Sukkur, was built on the western bank of the Indus alongside what was once a small village and directly across from the historic city of Rohri. it is about 470 km north west from Karachi and 300 km from Hyderabad.

A military garrison was established in 1839 but disbanded in 1845 due to an outbreak of a fever. Sukkur, however, continued to grow in importance as a trading centre. The Lansdowne Bridge was built in 1889 and was one of the first bridges to cross the Indus river making the journey between Karachi, Quetta and Multan easier and as a consequence the town became an important railway centre. In the early days Sukkur was known as a boatbuilding town but with the construction of canals and the railways its importance was more focussed on the handling of the regions agricultural production. Crops produced included cotton, cloth, silk, opium and sugar.

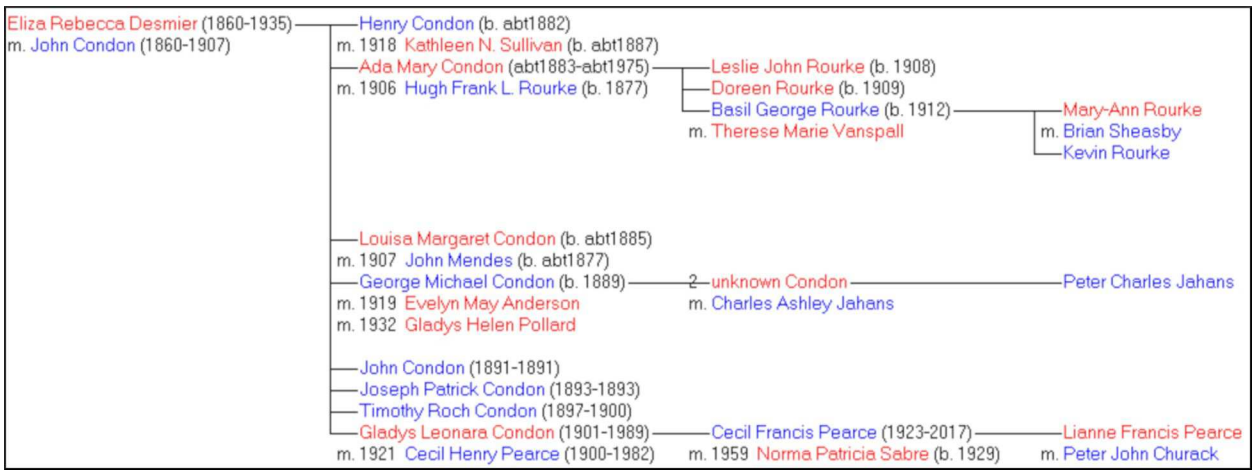
In 1901 the population of Sukkur was about 31,000 with just 1% christians (Europeans and Anglo Indians).

The Sukkur Barrage (formally called Lloyd Barrage),was commissioned in 1923 and still is the headworks of one of the largest irrigation systems in the world.

source: A gazeteer of the province of Sindh (1874) accessed through Archive.org

Chapter 17

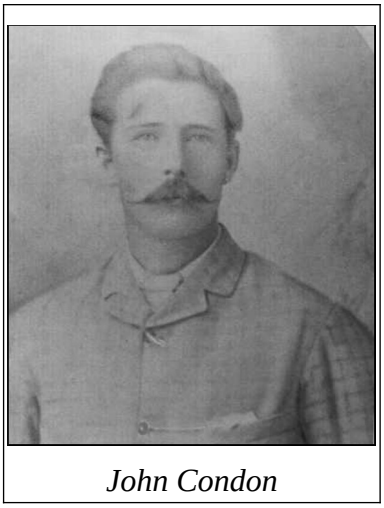
ELIZA REBECCA DESMIER & JOHN CONDON


Eliza Rebecca Desmier (1860-1935)
m. John Condon (1860-1907)
Henry Condon (b. abt1882)
m. 1918 Kathleen N. Sullivan (b. abt1887)
Ada Mary Condon (abt1883-abt1975)
m. 1906 Hugh Frank L. Rourke (b. 1877)
Leslie John Rourke (b. 1908)
Doreen Rourke (b. 1909)
Basil George Rourke (b. 1912)
m. Therese Marie Vanspall
Mary-Ann Rourke
m. Brian Sheasby
Kevin Rourke
Louisa Margaret Condon (b. abt1885)
m. 1907 John Mendes (b. abt1877)
George Michael Condon (b. 1889)
m. 1919 Evelyn May Anderson
m. 1932 Gladys Helen Pollard
2 unknown Condon
m. Charles Ashley Jahans
Peter Charles Jahans
John Condon (1891-1891)
Joseph Patrick Condon (1893-1893)
Timothy Roch Condon (1897-1900)
Gladys Leonara Condon (1901-1989)
m. 1921 Cecil Henry Pearce (1900-1982)
Cecil Francis Pearce (1923-2017)
m. 1959 Norma Patricia Sabre (b. 1929)
Lianne Francis Pearce
m. Peter John Churack

Eliza Rebecca Desmier

Eliza was the 10th child of George Charles Desmier & Marianna

All of the photographs for this family and most of the information has been passed on to me by great-granddaughter Lianne Churack (née Pearce). Form more information see chapter 23.



John Condon

Eliza is thought to have married John Condon in 1880 when she was about 20 years old but no supporting documentation has been found. John was also born in 1860 in Hyderabad, Sindh. His father Michael was a Sergeant in the British artillery stationed there.

Eliza Rebecca Desmier

Henry Condon

1st child of Eliza Rebecca Desmier & John Condon

Henry is assumed to be the first child of the couple, born about two years after their marriage, however, there is no supporting evidence. His marriage registration extract states that his fathers name was Henry not John but this is thought to be a transcription error. No baptism extracts have been found for either a Henry or a Harry Condon. Henry married Kathleen Norah Sullivan from Multan in Multan in 1918 when he was a 36 year old bachelor and a sub-divisional inspector for the NW Railway. Multan is a town on the railway line from Hyderabad to Lahore.

Ada Mary Condon

2nd child of Eliza Rebecca Desmier & John Condon

Married in Multan in 1906 when she was 23 years old her husband was 29 year old boilermaker, Hugh Frank Leslie Rourke. Hugh was also her first cousin who was from Sukkur (see chapter 16). The couple had at least three children. I have a DNA match to this family through Mary-Ann Rourke (see chapter 23).

Leslie John Rourke

1st child of Ada Condon & Hugh Rourke

Born 1908 in Sukkur. Leslie is thought to have been a marine engineer with the Merchant Navy. Leslie is thought to have died in Whitefields, near Bangalore about 1997.

Doreen Mary Rourke

2nd child of Ada Condon & Hugh Rourke

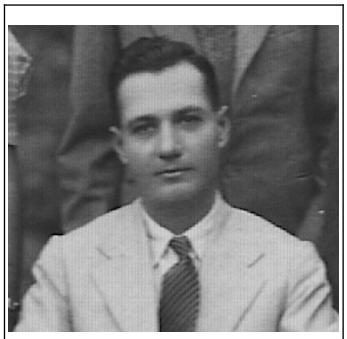
Thought to have been born in 1909 (no extract found) Doreen became a nun at the Convent of Jesus and Mary, Chanakapuri, New Delhi. She died about 2001.

Basil George Rourke

3rd child of Ada Condon & Hugh Rourke

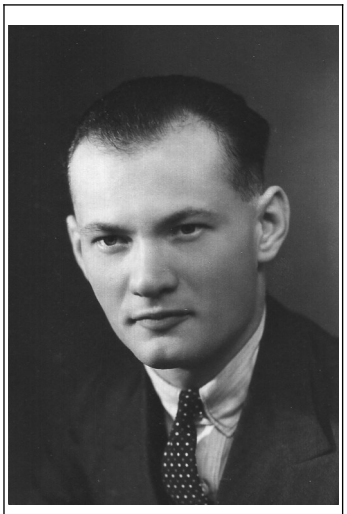
Born in Sukkur in 1912 Basil eventually immigrated to England and died in the Birmingham area when he was 90 years old.

Ada Mary Condon



Lesley John Rourke

Doreen Rourke



Basil George Rourke

Louisa Margaret Condon

3rd child of Eliza Rebecca Desmier & John Condon

Louisa was 22 years old when she married 30 year old railway guard, John Mendes in Multan, 1907. they are thought to have had five children before John died in 1935. The family is believed to have subsequently immigrated to England.

George Michael Condon

4th child of Eliza Rebecca Desmier & John Condon

George was first married in 1919 in Rawalpindi to Evelyn May Anderson. At the time he was an assistant station master. The couple had three children before Evelyn died and George married a second time to Gladys Helen Pollard. The family later immigrated to England. I have a DNA match to this family through Charles Jahans (see chapter 23).

John Condon

5th child of Eliza Rebecca Desmier & John Condon

Born, 1891 in Multan, John was a premature birth and lived just 30 minutes.

Joseph Patrick Condon

6th child of Eliza Rebecca Desmier & John Condon

Joseph was born in 1893 when his father was an engine driver based in Multan. He died six months later following a throat infection.

Timothy Roch Condon

7th child of Eliza Rebecca Desmier & John Condon

Timothy was born in 1897 in Multan but died three years later of a throat infection.

Gladys Leonara May Condon

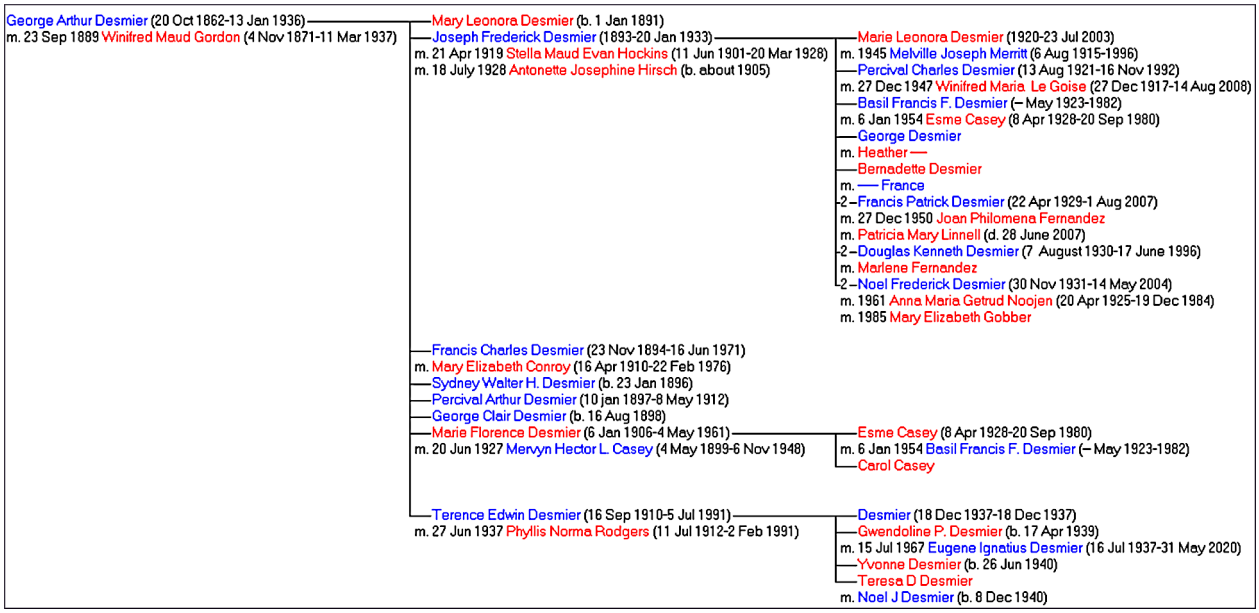
8th child of Eliza Rebecca Desmier & John Condon

Gladys is believed to have been born in Kotri, near Hyderabad and where Eliza's parents were from. A family legend is that her parents at one time had a shoe factory. It may have been in this area as the available birth extracts for her siblings indicate that her father was a driver when they were born. When she was nineteen (in 1921) she married 22-year-old Cecil Henry Pearce, an inspector for the Burma Oil Company. The couple had four children. After Partition the family immigrated to Western Australia. I have a DNA match with this family through Lianne Churack (see chapter 23).

Gladys Leonora Mary Condon

Chapter 18

GEORGE ARTHUR DESMIER & WINIFRED MAUD GORDON


George Arthur Desmier (20 Oct 1862-13 Jan 1936)
m. 23 Sep 1889 Winifred Maud Gordon (4 Nov 1871-11 Mar 1937)
Mary Leonora Desmier (b. 1 Jan 1891)
Joseph Frederick Desmier (1893-20 Jan 1933)
m. 21 Apr 1919 Stella Maud Evan Hockins (11 Jun 1901-20 Mar 1928)
m. 18 July 1928 Antonette Josephine Hirsch (b. about 1905)
Marie Leonora Desmier (1920-23 Jul 2003)
m. 1945 Melville Joseph Merritt (6 Aug 1915-1996)
Percival Charles Desmier (13 Aug 1921-16 Nov 1992)
m. 27 Dec 1947 Winifred Maria Le Goise (27 Dec 1917-14 Aug 2008)
Basil Francis F. Desmier (– May 1923-1982)
m. 6 Jan 1954 Esme Casey (8 Apr 1928-20 Sep 1980)
George Desmier
m. Heather —
Bernadette Desmier
m. — France
-2–Francis Patrick Desmier (22 Apr 1929-1 Aug 2007)
m. 27 Dec 1950 Joan Philomena Fernandez
m. Patricia Mary Linnell (d. 28 June 2007)
-2–Douglas Kenneth Desmier (7 August 1930-17 June 1996)
m. Marlene Fernandez
-2–Noel Frederick Desmier (30 Nov 1931-14 May 2004)
m. 1961 Anna Maria Getrud Noojen (20 Apr 1925-19 Dec 1984)
m. 1985 Mary Elizabeth Gobber
Francis Charles Desmier (23 Nov 1894-16 Jun 1971)
m. Mary Elizabeth Conroy (16 Apr 1910-22 Feb 1976)
Sydney Walter H. Desmier (b. 23 Jan 1896)
Percival Arthur Desmier (10 jan 1897-8 May 1912)
George Clair Desmier (b. 16 Aug 1898)
Marie Florence Desmier (6 Jan 1906-4 May 1961)
m. 20 Jun 1927 Mervyn Hector L. Casey (4 May 1899-6 Nov 1948)
Esme Casey (8 Apr 1928-20 Sep 1980)
m. 6 Jan 1954 Basil Francis F. Desmier (– May 1923-1982)
Carol Casey
Terence Edwin Desmier (16 Sep 1910-5 Jul 1991)
m. 27 Jun 1937 Phyllis Norma Rodgers (11 Jul 1912-2 Feb 1991)
Desmier (18 Dec 1937-18 Dec 1937)
Gwendoline P. Desmier (b. 17 Apr 1939)
m. 15 Jul 1967 Eugene Ignatius Desmier (16 Jul 1937-31 May 2020)
Yvonne Desmier (b. 26 Jun 1940)
Teresa D Desmier
m. Noel J Desmier (b. 8 Dec 1940)

In this chapter I have grouped together those children of George and Winifred Desmier that, as yet, there is little information on. Other children and their descendants follow in separate chapters.

George Arthur Desmier & Winifred Maud Gordon

1st recorded child of Frederick Desmier & Marie Leonora Laws

George was buried in St Mary's Roman Catholic (RC) cemetery in Trichinopoly (nearly always shortened to Trichy). On the tombstone was written that he was born 20th October 1862 and died 13th June 1936. his death extract is compatible with these dates and the cause of death was given as 'old age' at 71 years. His profession was given as a retired public works inspector for the South Indian Railway.

George married Winifred Maud Gordon in 1889 in the Catholic Cathedral in Trichinopoly in 1889. He was a 24 year old permanent way inspector and Winifred was 17 years old. Winifred was a daughter of Charles and Julia Gordon and was born in Negapatam, a coastal town about 100km east of Trichy. Her father was an engine driver at the time of her birth and not long after Winifred's birth the family moved to Trichy where more children were born.

George and Winifred had eight children, all born in Trichy. Winifred died in 1937

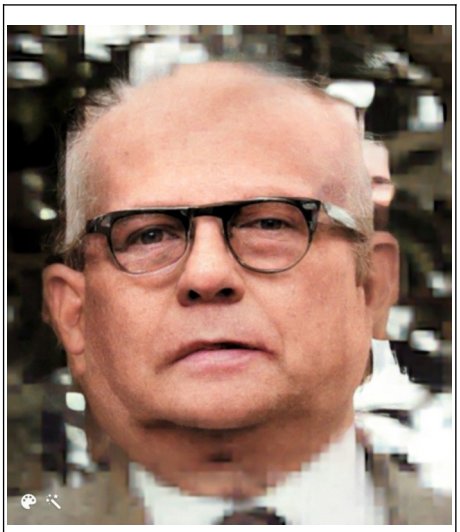
Mary Leonora Desmier

1st child of George Arthur Desmier & Winifred

All that is available for Mary is a baptism extract from the RC church, Trichy. George's occupation was recorded as a line inspector.

Francis Charles Desmier

3rd child of George Arthur Desmier & Winifred



Francis Charles Desmier

Francis (born 1894) was the family genealogist for the southern clan of the Desmiers. he passed on some information about the family tree going back to Charles Julien Desmier to family members that left India for England or Australia after partition in 1947. He married Mary Elizabeth Conroy (no date available) daughter of teacher James Francis Conroy. A birth extract for Mary Elizabeth born to James Francis and Mary Ann Conroy is available showing that she was born in 1900 in Allahabad.

Francis and Mary had no children. Francis (Frank) died in 1971 and is buried in his father's grave. Mary died in 1976 and is buried in her fathers grave both in the RC cemetery in Trichy.

Sydney Walter Hugrant Desmier

4th child of George Arthur Desmier & Winifred

Sydney was born in 1896 in Karur a town about 30km west of Trichy when his father was an inspector there. He is not mentioned in Frank's family tree and so he probably died in infancy.

Percival Arthur Desmier

5th child of George Arthur Desmier & Winifred

The family was living back in Trichy when Percival was born in 1897. No further information found for him. Not mentioned in Frank's family tree (may have died in infancy).

George Clair Desmier

6th child of George Arthur Desmier & Winifred

George was born in 1898 in Trichy. No further information found for him. Not mentioned in Frank's family tree (may have died in infancy).

Marie Florence Desmier

7th child of George Arthur Desmier & Winifred

Marie married 28 year old Mervyn Hector Leopold Casey in 1927. Mervyn at that time was a gaoler living in Salem about 100 km north of Trichy. The wedding took place in St Mary's cathedral in Trichy. Other family members recalled that the couple had two daughters Esme and Carol. Esme married her first cousin,Basil Desmier (chapter 15).

Marie died in 1961 in Trichinopoly.

Terence Edwin Desmier

8th child of George Arthur Desmier & Winifred

Terence was born in 1910 (no baptism record found). In 1937 he married Phyllis Norma Rodgers in Trichinopoly. Their first child was stillborn and not given a name. Gwendoline was born in 1939 and baptised at Podanur near Coimbatore west of Trichy. No baptism records have been found for Yvonne and Teresa. Gwendoline and Teresa married their second cousins and their photos are included in chapter 23.

The original St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Trichonopoly
photo Eugene Desmier

St Mary's Cathedral Tiruchirapall, 2015
(redevelopment began 2011)
source wikimedia commons ag1805x

Trichinopoly

Trichinopoly, now officially known as Tiruchirappalli but more commonly referred to as Trichy or Tiruchi, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in South India. There is evidence of habitation going back to the third century. In the Carnatic Wars (1746-1763) The British East India Company eventually defeated the French East India Company and restored Ali Khan Wallajah to his throne establishing a base for troops in Trichy to protect his lands in exchange for trading benefits. The British subsequently incorporated his Carnatic kingdom into the Madras Presidency in 1801 after it was found that Wallajah's son had been colluding with Tipu Sultan against them during the Mysore wars.

In the first census conducted by the British in 1871 the population of Trichy was 77,000 increasing to 105,000 by 1901 and 847,000 by 2011. In 1901 about 90% of the population in the region were Hindus and 5% Christians. Of the Christians the vast majority were natives and followed the Roman Catholic faith.

Under the rule of the East India Company the city was known for the quality of the cigars it produced and for the leather produced from the tanneries. Both of these were exported to the United Kingdom. The great Southern of India Railway Company was established in London in 1853 and a line to Nagapattinam was operating by 1859. Lines to Erode, Tanjore and Coimbatore soon followed. The central workshops for the company continue to this day to be a major facility employing more than 6,000 people.

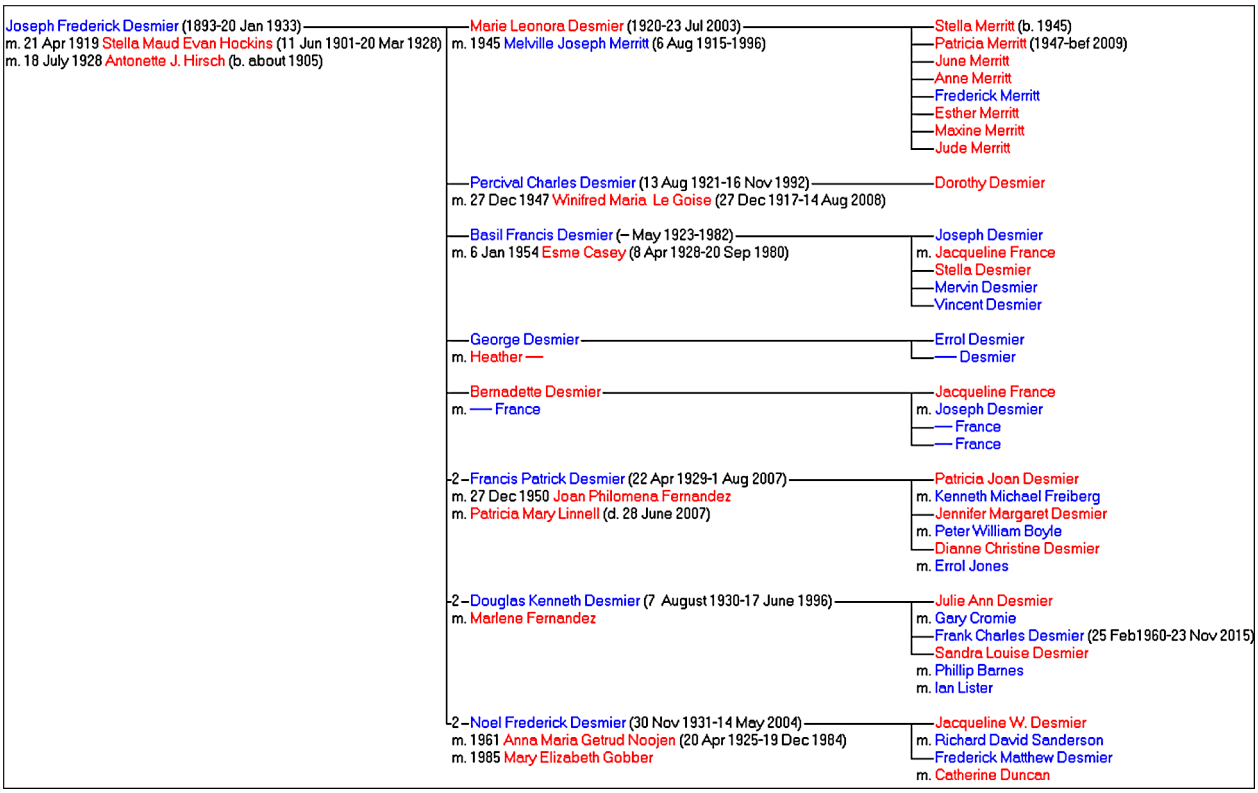
Trichinopoly was considered by the EIC to have a climate healthy for Europeans being generally hot and dry with most rain falling during the two monsoon seasons.

Sources: The Imperial Gazeteer of India (1909) accessed through dsal.uchicago.edu,
Wikipedia Tiruchirappalli (en.wikipedia.org)

Chapter 19

JOSEPH FREDERICK DESMIER

& HIS WIVES STELLA AND ANTONETTE


Joseph Frederick Desmier (1893-20 Jan 1933)
m. 21 Apr 1919 Stella Maud Evan Hockins (11 Jun 1901-20 Mar 1928)
m. 18 July 1928 Antonette J. Hirsch (b. about 1905)
Marie Leonora Desmier (1920-23 Jul 2003)
m. 1945 Melville Joseph Merritt (6 Aug 1915-1996)
Stella Merritt (b. 1945)
Patricia Merritt (1947-bef 2009)
June Merritt
Anne Merritt
Frederick Merritt
Esther Merritt
Maxine Merritt
Jude Merritt
Percival Charles Desmier (13 Aug 1921-16 Nov 1992)
m. 27 Dec 1947 Winifred Maria Le Goise (27 Dec 1917-14 Aug 2008)
Dorothy Desmier
Basil Francis Desmier (– May 1923-1982)
m. 6 Jan 1954 Esme Casey (8 Apr 1928-20 Sep 1980)
Joseph Desmier
m. Jacqueline France
Stella Desmier
Mervin Desmier
Vincent Desmier
George Desmier
m. Heather —
Errol Desmier
— Desmier
Bernadette Desmier
m. — France
Jacqueline France
m. Joseph Desmier
— France
— France
2 Francis Patrick Desmier (22 Apr 1929-1 Aug 2007)
m. 27 Dec 1950 Joan Philomena Fernandez
m. Patricia Mary Linnell (d. 28 June 2007)
Patricia Joan Desmier
m. Kenneth Michael Freiberg
Jennifer Margaret Desmier
m. Peter William Boyle
Dianne Christine Desmier
m. Errol Jones
2 Douglas Kenneth Desmier (7 August 1930-17 June 1996)
m. Marlene Fernandez
Julie Ann Desmier
m. Gary Cromie
Frank Charles Desmier (25 Feb1960-23 Nov 2015)
Sandra Louise Desmier
m. Phillip Barnes
m. Ian Lister
2 Noel Frederick Desmier (30 Nov 1931-14 May 2004)
m. 1961 Anna Maria Getrud Noojen (20 Apr 1925-19 Dec 1984)
m. 1985 Mary Elizabeth Gobber
Jacqueline W. Desmier
m. Richard David Sanderson
Frederick Matthew Desmier
m. Catherine Duncan

Joseph Frederick Desmier

2nd child of George Arthur Desmier & Winifred

Joseph was born in 1893 according to records kept by his brother Frank and this is compatible with the age recorded on his burial extract._Joseph married Stella Maud Evan Hockins in 1919 at Trichy. At the time Joseph was a signalling inspector based at Chingleput which is midway between Pondicherry and Madras. The couple had five children together before Stella died in 1928 of Typhoid. She was 26 years old. _Later that year Joseph married Antonette Josephine Hirsh from Bangalore but of an Austrian family. The marriage took place in Madura which is about 150 km SW of Trichy even though Joseph gave his abode as Trichy. Antonette gave birth to three boys and two girls.

Joseph and family had moved to Madras when he died of cerebral malaria in 1933 at the age of 40. On his death extract his occupation was recorded as a district signalling inspector with the railways. No record of Antonette's death has been found.

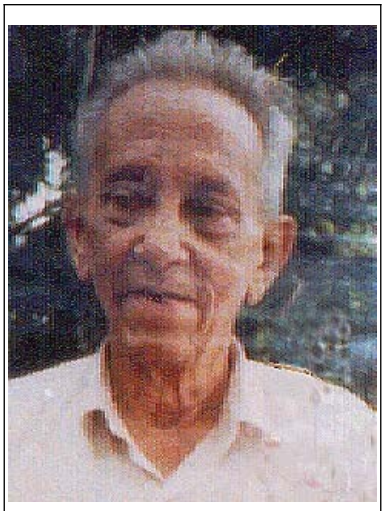
Marie Leonora Desmier

1st child of Joseph Frederick Desmier &Stella

Marie married Melville Hamilton Merritt in 1945. They had seven children; Stella, June, Patricia, Anne, Frederick, Esther, Maxine and Jude. In the 1960's the family immigrated to Victoria, Australia. Melville worked for the Victorian railways before retirement. Melville died in 1996 and Marie in 2003.

Percival Charles Ignatius Desmier

2nd child of Joseph Frederick Desmier &Stella



Percival Charles Ignatius Desmier

Percy was born in 1921. In 1947 he married Winifred Maria le Goise whilst he was stationed in Moulamein, Burma as part of the British-Indian army. I was sent the following account of Percy's life by his wife Winifred.

When the British-Indian army was at war with Japan, many of our boys were serving with them including Percy. He had on his uniform with three stripes so I think that he was a Sergeant or Warrant Officer, l am not sure. Anyway he and the forces came to Burma. It was only in the last faze of the war that he came to my area (Moulamein. South Burma) with the Beach. Group. He was a Security Officer and knew all about us, our families etc.. We_were under house arrest and only allowed to do some marketing and to attend Sunday Church services. Since he was a Catholic he came to pick us up to attend Mass and to bring us home safe and sound. Here my dear mother used to cater for the boys who came to our house. She used to say "Poor boys, they must be missing their homes." and so she fed them.

A year later, towards the end of the war and the surrender of the Japanese army some 48 miles from our home at a place called Amherst, the boys would come to visit us. Percy was also in charge of the Cinema Section and when there was a good picture on he would come and pick us up. There were many families. I was a working girl, my sisters Irene, Leonie and Mildred all knew Percy. When the war ended and he had to return home to India Percy approached my father and asked for my hand in marriage. After arrangements on his side and mine we got engaged on my father's birthday, l0th February and then married on 27th December 1947 which is my birthday. I returned to India with Percy on 8th February 1948.

When the British left India later that year our boys joined the Indian Armed Forces. After a course at Poona Percy passed out as a 2nd Lieutenant and subsequently joined the signal corps. He has been stationed at Calcutta, Delhi, Meerut, Jullandar, Mathura, Ranchi (where our daughter Dorothy was born in 1958) back to_ Tultandar, Ferozepore and then Goa after it was being taken over from the Portugese.

Percy and Winifred, wedding Moulmein, Burma 1947 (colourised)

His last post was Jabalpur. Then he was sent to Karrakudi to the N.C.C as Officer Commanding, after that he was sent back to the Signal centre at Jabalpur where he put in his resignation because aunty Kate (Mary wife of Francis Desmier) became seriously ill. After four months in hospital she expired on 22nd February 1976. Percy retired as a Senior Major.

After his retirement Percy spent his time by helping the poor and needy, writing applications for them, helping them with cash or kind. He was a friend to all. He loved gardening and spent his time watering the plants daily. He loved roses best. After 16 years of retirement he became ill and died on 16th November 1992.

I have been to many places with Percy when family accommodation was available. Family life in the Army was very enjoyable, we all lived as brothers and sisters of a family.

Percy died in 1992 and was buried in the grave of his grandmother, Winifred Maud Desmier (née Gordon).

Winifred, Wife of Percy Desmier

Winifred, Percy's wife, was born Winifred Maria Le Goise. She died in Trichonopoly in 2008. Winifred sent me a lot of information about the descendants of Frederick Desmier that had lived in South. India and in particular in Trichinopoly. The following account of her life was sent to me by her daughter Dorothy who still lives in Tiruchirapalli and is a practising homeopathic doctor there.

On the 27th December 1917 a girl was born to Benjamin Francis and Margaret Lucy Le Goise. They named her Winifred Maria – (Winnie). She had her schooling at St. Joseph's Convent Moulmein, Myanmar then known as Burma. After passing her high school, she trained as a secretary learning short hand and typewriting. She worked for a short period until the war broke out. The whole family underwent the hardships of the war and it was during this period that she met a young sergeant from India_ - Percival Charles Desmier_ (Percy) whom she later married on the 27th 0f December 1948 and soon after she left Burma to settle down in India.

After the war Percy joined the Indian Army in the Corps of Signals and they lived in many cities of North India like Calcutta, Jullandar, Amritsar, Gorakpur, and Ranchi. It was at Ranchi that she gave birth to a girl on 27th December 1958. They named her Dorothy Margaret Bernadette.

In 1963 Winnie_ and Percy settled down at Trichy then known as Trichinopoly in South India so that their daughter could attend St. Joseph's Anglo-Indian Girls High School where all the girls of the Desmier Family had their education.

Once at Trichy Winnie soon joined many local charities and associations. She became a member of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and later became its President. Under this banner she conducted many meetings and did a lot of Social work like visiting the sick and training young girls in needle work and hand crafts. Later she joined the Vincent De Paul Society and became the President of the parish branch of this society. She continued in this post till 1987. In 1970 she started a branch of "The Blue Army of Our Lady" at Trichy and from then on had a very strong devotion to Our Lady of Fatima.

She spoke about the devotion to the rosary wherever she went and always carried Holy pictures, rosaries and prayer leaflets wherever she went.

_She was well known and "Aunty Winnie" was the centre of attraction wherever she went. A very active person she was always pottering in and around the house and garden. This continued until the 2nd January 2006 when she had a fall at home and sustained a Fracture of her hip. The last months of her life she was bedridden and she slowly accepted that she would never walk again. As the months went by she declined her food and lived for sometime on liquids. She grew weaker and on 14th August 2008 left this plane of existence to live once again with her Lord and Creator.

She had a well attended funeral on 15th August 2008 and was laid to rest at St. Mary's Cemetery, Trichy.

Winifred and Dorothy (2006)

George Desmier

3rd child of Joseph Frederick Desmier &Stella

No records have been found for George but Winifred recalled that he married a girl called Heather. She remembered that he was part of the army medical corps and lived in Egmore, Madras with two children (one called Errol).

Bernadette Desmier

4th child of Joseph Frederick Desmier &Stella

Winifred thought that Bernadette married somebody with the surname France and that they had three children (one called Jacqueline). No records found.

Basil Desmier

5th child of Joseph Frederick Desmier &Stella

Basil is thought to have been born in 1922/3. A cousin, Eugene Desmier, recalled that Basil served with the Indian Air Force and then worked for Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd in Bangalore. In 1954 Basil married his cousin Esme Casey, they had four children (Joseph, Stella, Mervin and Vincent). One of Basil's interests was breeding game birds. He is believed to have died in 1982.

Francis Patrick Desmier

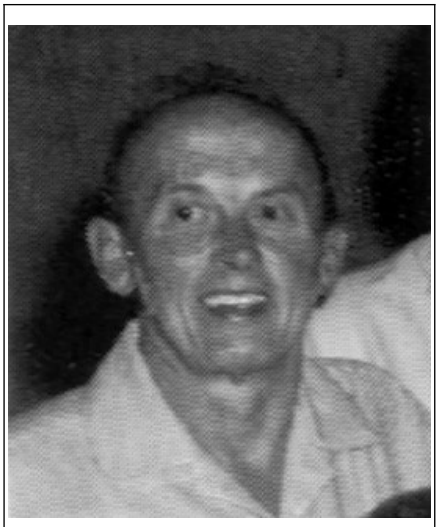
1st child of Joseph Frederick Desmier & Antonette

Francis was the first child born after Joseph married his second wife Antonette. In 1950 Francis married Joan Philomena Ferandez in Trichy. They had three children Patricia, Jennifer and Dianne and the family immigrated to Australia. He had a second marriage to Patricia Linnell.

Douglas Kenneth Desmier

2nd child of Joseph Frederick Desmier & Antonette

Douglas, born 1930, was the second son of the second marriage of Joseph Desmier. He was one of my first contacts for this branch of the family and it was through him that I was able to contact other members in India and England. _On the advice of his uncle Frank, Doug immigrated to Melbourne Australia in 1950. In 1956 he married Marlene who he had known in India before immigrating. They had three children Julie, Frank and Sandra. Doug worked in administrative positions for the railways both in India and in Melbourne. He died in 1996 after a prolonged period of heart related illness.



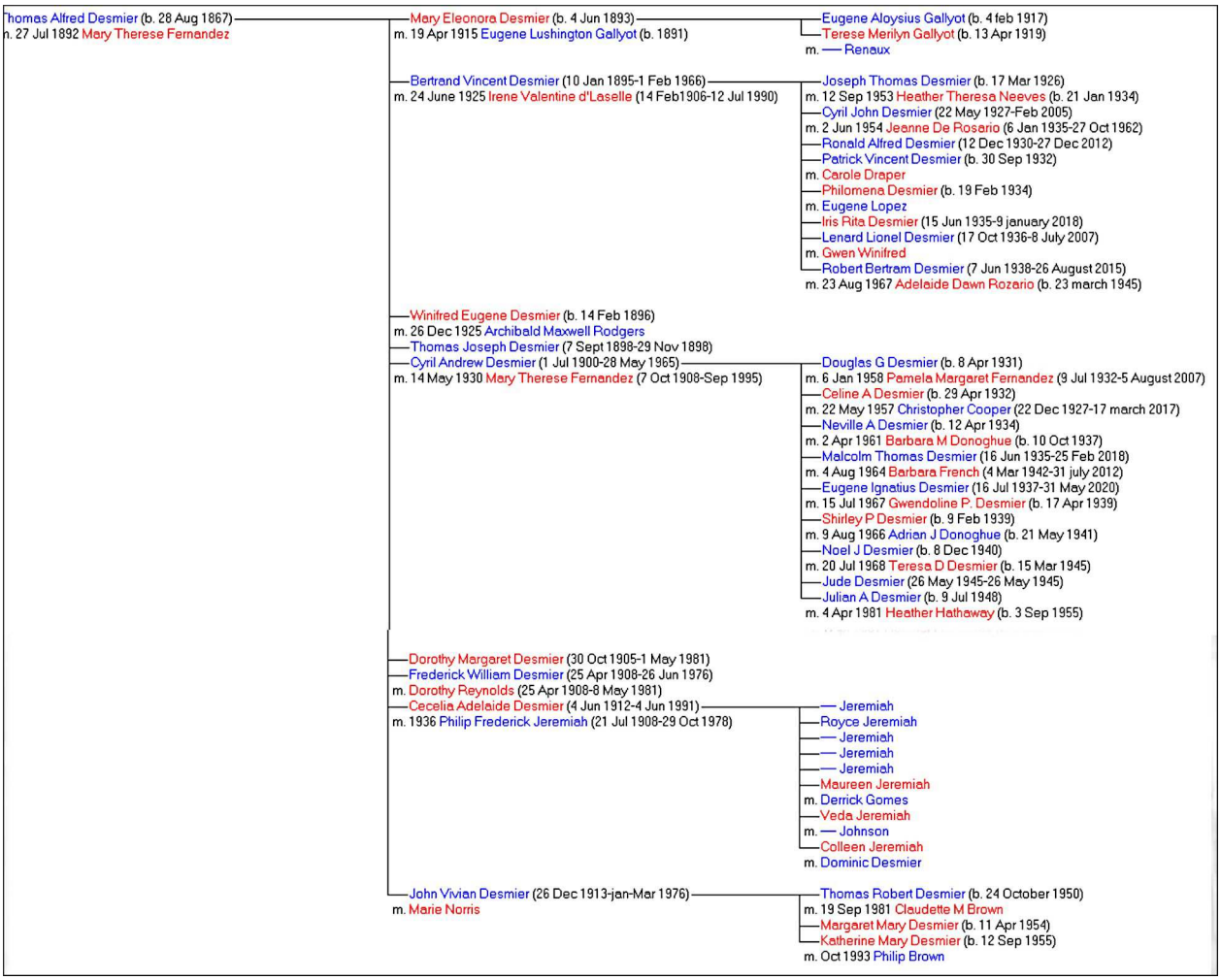
Douglas Kenneth Desmier

Noel Frederick Desmier

3rd child of Joseph Frederick Desmier & Antonette

Noel, born in Villapuram (part of Madura) in 1931, came out to_Australia when he was 19 (at about the same time or with his brother Doug). They were later followed by brother Frank and their mother Antonette. He met and eventually married Anna Maria Gertrud Noojen in 1961who was on a working holiday in Australia with her brother. They were from Eindhoven in the Netherlands. They had two children Jacqueline and Frederick. The family later moved to Queensland where there are descendants. Anna Maria died in 1984 and Noel remarried Mary Elizabeth Gobber. Noel died in 2004 in Bundaberg, Queensland, Australia.

An express diesel about to leave Trichonopoly station
source: Eugene Desmier


Thomas Alfred Desmier (b. 28 Aug 1867)
n. 27 Jul 1892 Mary Therese Fernandez
Mary Eleonora Desmier (b. 4 Jun 1893)
m. 19 Apr 1915 Eugene Lushington Gallyot (b. 1891)
Eugene Aloysius Gallyot (b. 4 feb 1917)
Terese Merilyn Gallyot (b. 13 Apr 1919)
m. — Renaux
Bertrand Vincent Desmier (10 Jan 1895-1 Feb 1966)
m. 24 June 1925 Irene Valentine d'Laselle (14 Feb1906-12 Jul 1990)
Joseph Thomas Desmier (b. 17 Mar 1926)
m. 12 Sep 1953 Heather Theresa Neeves (b. 21 Jan 1934)
Cyril John Desmier (22 May 1927-Feb 2005)
m. 2 Jun 1954 Jeanne De Rosario (6 Jan 1935-27 Oct 1962)
Ronald Alfred Desmier (12 Dec 1930-27 Dec 2012)
Patrick Vincent Desmier (b. 30 Sep 1932)
m. Carole Draper
Philomena Desmier (b. 19 Feb 1934)
m. Eugene Lopez
Iris Rita Desmier (15 Jun 1935-9 january 2018)
Lenard Lionel Desmier (17 Oct 1936-8 July 2007)
m. Gwen Winifred
Robert Bertram Desmier (7 Jun 1938-26 August 2015)
m. 23 Aug 1967 Adelaide Dawn Rozario (b. 23 march 1945)
Winifred Eugene Desmier (b. 14 Feb 1896)
m. 26 Dec 1925 Archibald Maxwell Rodgers
Thomas Joseph Desmier (7 Sept 1898-29 Nov 1898)
Cyril Andrew Desmier (1 Jul 1900-28 May 1965)
m. 14 May 1930 Mary Therese Fernandez (7 Oct 1908-Sep 1995)
Douglas G Desmier (b. 8 Apr 1931)
m. 6 Jan 1958 Pamela Margaret Fernandez (9 Jul 1932-5 August 2007)
Celine A Desmier (b. 29 Apr 1932)
m. 22 May 1957 Christopher Cooper (22 Dec 1927-17 march 2017)
Neville A Desmier (b. 12 Apr 1934)
m. 2 Apr 1961 Barbara M Donoghue (b. 10 Oct 1937)
Malcolm Thomas Desmier (16 Jun 1935-25 Feb 2018)
m. 4 Aug 1964 Barbara French (4 Mar 1942-31 july 2012)
Eugene Ignatius Desmier (16 Jul 1937-31 May 2020)
m. 15 Jul 1967 Gwendoline P. Desmier (b. 17 Apr 1939)
Shirley P Desmier (b. 9 Feb 1939)
m. 9 Aug 1966 Adrian J Donoghue (b. 21 May 1941)
Noel J Desmier (b. 8 Dec 1940)
m. 20 Jul 1968 Teresa D Desmier (b. 15 Mar 1945)
Jude Desmier (26 May 1945-26 May 1945)
Julian A Desmier (b. 9 Jul 1948)
m. 4 Apr 1981 Heather Hathaway (b. 3 Sep 1955)
Dorothy Margaret Desmier (30 Oct 1905-1 May 1981)
Frederick William Desmier (25 Apr 1908-26 Jun 1976)
m. Dorothy Reynolds (25 Apr 1908-8 May 1981)
Cecelia Adelaide Desmier (4 Jun 1912-4 Jun 1991)
m. 1936 Philip Frederick Jeremiah (21 Jul 1908-29 Oct 1978)
— Jeremiah
Royce Jeremiah
— Jeremiah
— Jeremiah
— Jeremiah
Maureen Jeremiah
m. Derrick Gomes
Veda Jeremiah
m. — Johnson
Colleen Jeremiah
m. Dominic Desmier
John Vivian Desmier (26 Dec 1913-jan-Mar 1976)
m. Marie Norris
Thomas Robert Desmier (b. 24 October 1950)
m. 19 Sep 1981 Claudette M Brown
Margaret Mary Desmier (b. 11 Apr 1954)
Katherine Mary Desmier (b. 12 Sep 1955)
m. Oct 1993 Philip Brown

Descendants of Thomas Alfred Desmier & Mary Fernandez

Chapter 20

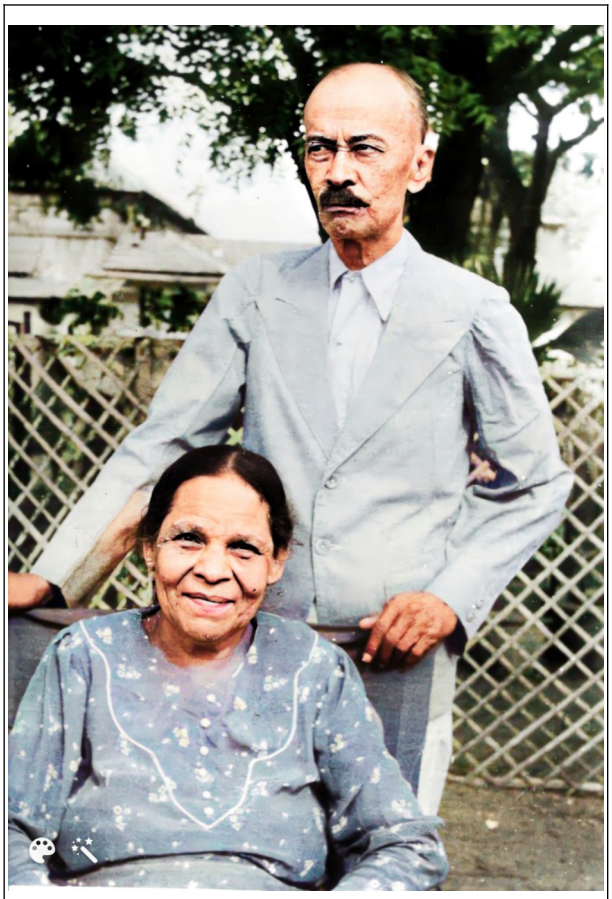
THOMAS ALFRED DESMIER AND MARY FERNANDEZ

Thomas Alfred Desmier

2nd child of Frederick Desmier & Marie

Uncle Tom, as he was known to many of the Desmiers in Trichy, was born in 1867 (advice Eugene Desmier) and worked in clerical and administrative positions for the South Indian railway. In addition he was the organist at St Mary's Cathedral. The pipe organ is still in the Cathedral to this day. He was also instrumental in the planning of the Railway Colony at Golden Rock in Trichinopoly. He married Mary Therese Fenandez in 1892 and they had nine children.

In this chapter I have grouped together those children of Thomas and Mary (or Marie) Desmier that, as yet, there is little information on. All of their children were born and baptised in the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Trichinipoly. Other children and their descendants follow in separate chapters.



Thomas Desmier & Mary Fernandez (1941)

Mary Eleonora Desmier

1st child of Thomas Alfred Desmier & Mary

Mary was born in 1893 and nicknamed Girlie. In 1915 she married local boy Eugene Lushington Gallyot an assistant station master. Available extracts indicate that they had at least two children; Eugene Aloysious Gallyot, born 1917 and Terese Merilyn Charlotte Salette Gallyot born in 1919. Both children were baptised in St Mary's Trichinopoly which was also recorded as their town of residence, however, their father Eugene's recorded profession is interesting. In 1917 he was recorded as 'stationmaster front Africa' and in 1919 as 'Asst. stationmaster Baghdad'. In both instances baptism occurred shortly after birth so it seems that Eugene was working oversees and coming home every year or so. No further information has been found on the family but Winifred (first cousin by marriage, once removed) recalled that they lived in Kenya for sometime and that she died there. Winifred also remembered that Terese (who she knew as Merilyn) returned to India and married someone with the surname Renaux and then went back to Kenya. Merilyn was a teacher but she died early of throat cancer.

Winifred Eugene Desmier

3rd child of Thomas Alfred Desmier & Mary

Winifred was born 1896 when her father was a clerk with the railways in Trichy. In 1925 she was 28 years old when she married 44 year old Archibald Maxwell Rogers, a railway fitter from Negapatam (east of Trichy). No record of her death has been found.

Thomas Joseph Desmier

4th child of Thomas Alfred Desmier & Mary

Thomas was born in 1898 but died less than three months later of a fever.

Dorothy Margaret Desmier

6th child of Thomas Alfred Desmier & Mary

Dorothy, born 1905, grew up to become a nursing sister. She never married. Dorrie died in 1981 aged 75 and is buried in Trichy.

Frederick William Desmier

7th child of Thomas Alfred Desmier & Mary

Frederick, born 1908, married Dorothy Reynolds. He died in 1976 in Vallenkani (east coast south of Trichy) aged 68 (advice Eugene Desmier).

Frederick William Desmier (colourised)

Cecelia Adelaide Desmier

8th child of Thomas Alfred Desmier & Mary

When Cecelia (Cissy to the family) was born in 1912 her father was a librarian with the South Indian Railway Co in Trichinopoly. In 1936 she married 27 year old Philip Frederick Jeremiah (Freddy) in Trichinopoly. Winifred remembered some things about the family. Cissy and Freddy had five sons, one died young and the other four worked for the railway company. Royce was the only one to remain unmarried.

The couple also had three daughters. Maureen married Derrick Gomes and they had two daughters before Maureen died in Madras. Veda married a Mr Johnson and had one daughter and three sons. Colleen married Dominic Desmier (her 1st cousin once removed) son of Patrick Desmier (chapter 19). They had at least one daughter.

John Vivian Desmier

9th child of Thomas Alfred Desmier & Mary

John was born on Boxing day, 1913 in Trichinopoly. At the time his father was a librarian for the railways. No record for a marriage has been found but it is known that he married Marie Norris. They

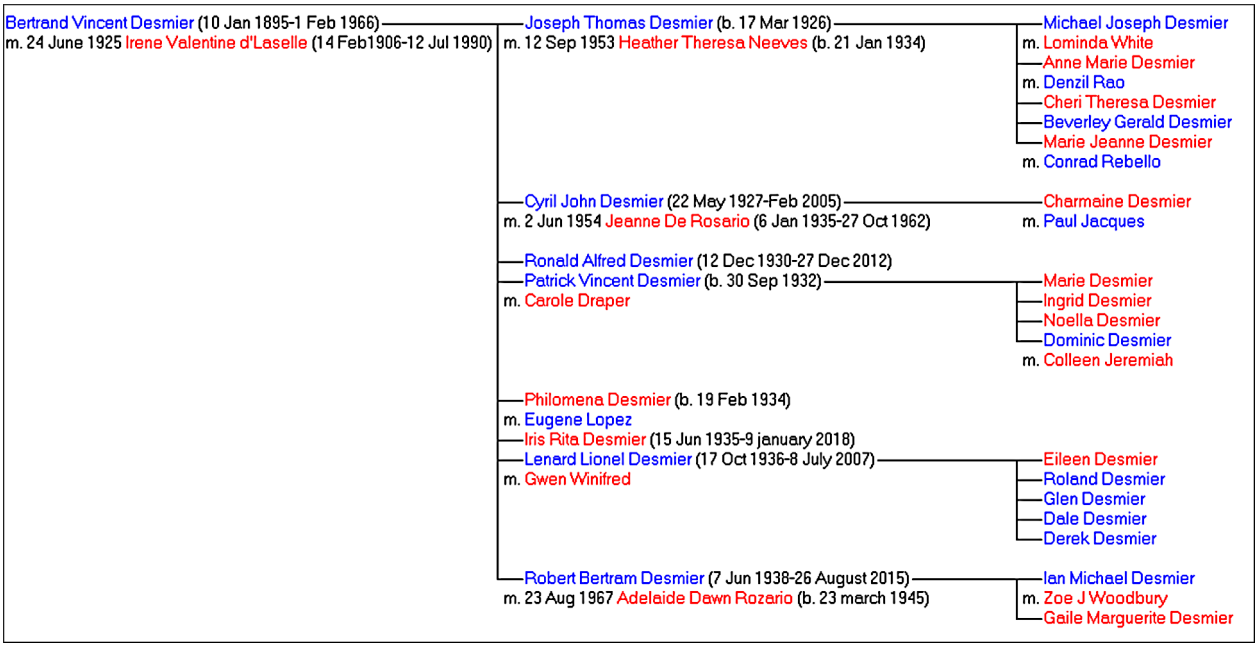
had three children Thomas, Margaret and Katharine. The family immigrated to England and settled in Surrey. John died in 1976.

Map of South India showing he main towns and railway routes.
Extracted from Imperial Gazeteer of India v26, Atlas 1909 Railway Map

Trichonopoly railway station (1990's)
source: Eugene Desmier

chapter 21

BEFRTRAND VINCENT DESMIER AND ILENE VALENTINE D'LASELLE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Joseph Thomas Desmier (b. 17 Mar 1926)
m. 12 Sep 1953 Heather Theresa Neeves (b. 21 Jan 1934)
Michael Joseph Desmier
m. Lominda White
Anne Marie Desmier
m. Denzil Rao
Cheri Theresa Desmier
Beverley Gerald Desmier
Marie Jeanne Desmier
m. Conrad Rebello
Cyril John Desmier (22 May 1927-Feb 2005)
m. 2 Jun 1954 Jeanne De Rosario (6 Jan 1935-27 Oct 1962)
Charmaine Desmier
m. Paul Jacques
Ronald Alfred Desmier (12 Dec 1930-27 Dec 2012)
Patrick Vincent Desmier (b. 30 Sep 1932)
m. Carole Draper
Marie Desmier
Ingrid Desmier
Noella Desmier
Dominic Desmier
m. Colleen Jeremiah
Philomena Desmier (b. 19 Feb 1934)
m. Eugene Lopez
Iris Rita Desmier (15 Jun 1935-9 january 2018)
Lenard Lionel Desmier (17 Oct 1936-8 July 2007)
m. Gwen Winifred
Eileen Desmier
Roland Desmier
Glen Desmier
Dale Desmier
Derek Desmier
Robert Bertram Desmier (7 Jun 1938-26 August 2015)
m. 23 Aug 1967 Adelaide Dawn Rozario (b. 23 march 1945)
Ian Michael Desmier
m. Zoe J Woodbury
Gaile Marguerite Desmier

Bertrand Vincent Desmier

2nd child of Thomas Alfred Demier & Mary

Bertram (or Bertrand) was born in 1895. In 1925 he married Ilene Valentine d'Laselle at the Sacred Heart church, Madura, Ilene's home town at the time. Ilene was born in Cuddalore a town on the coast about 100 km south of Madras. At the time of her birth her father, Alfred, was a surveyor in the ground-nuts (peanuts) trade. Bertand was a driver for the South Indian railway Co. Over the next 12 years they had eight children. The family immigrated to England and Bertram died in Surrey in 1966. Ilene (Irene on death transcription) died in 1990.

Joseph Thomas Desmier

1st child of Bertrand Vincent Desmier & Ilene

Joseph was born in Madura in 1926. He married Heather Theresa Neeves in Villapuram in 1953 (an available transcript for the marriage inaccurately states Joe's age as 16 not 26 and that his middle name was Patrick not Thomas). Joseph worked for the railways in India and retired in 1984. In 1989 the family immigrated to USA and three years later moved again to Victoria Australia. The couple had five children Michael, Anne, Cheri, Beverley and Marie. Descendants are now in Australia and USA.

Cyril John Desmier

2nd child of Bertrand Vincent Desmier & Ilene

Cyril (born Madura 1972) married Jeanne de Rosario in India in 1954. They later immigrated to England. They had one child Charmaine.

Ronald Alfred Desmier

3rd child of Bertrand Vincent Desmier & Ilene

Ronald was born in Trichinopoly in 1929 according to a transcript however family members believe his birthday was in December 1930. An extract for his baptism has not been found. Ron was unmarried and worked with the railways in India. In 1961 he immigrated to England. Ron died in 2012.

Patrick Vincent Desmier

4th child of Bertrand Vincent Desmier & Ilene

Patrick was born in 1932. He married Carole Draper and worked as a chief booking office clerk in Erode about 150 km NW of Trichy. No baptism or marriage records have been found for either of them. They had four children Marie, Ingrid, Noella and Dominic. Dominic married his first cousin, once removed, Cecelia Jeremiah (chapter 18).

Philomena Desmier

5th child of Bertrand Vincent Desmier & Ilene

Philomena was born in 1934. She married Eugene Lopez and _they immigrated to England in 1962. They had three children and descendants live in England. No records have been found.

_Iris Rita Desmier

6th child of Bertrand Vincent Desmier & Ilene

Iris (born 1935) remained unmarried and immigrated to England in 1961. She shared a house with brother Ronald before he died. Iris died in Wimbledon, Surrey in 2018.

Leonard Lionel Desmier

7th child of Bertrand Vincent Desmier & Ilene

Leonard (born Villapuram 1936) married Gwen Winifred and the family lived in Hubli, Karnataka where Leonard worked for the railways. They had five children Eileen, Roland, Glen, Dale and Derek. Gwen had a book of poems published *The Second Time Around* (publisher Y Music World, Karnataka, India 2004). Both Leonard and Gwen were keen musicians and singers and passed this interest on to their children.

Leonard with Gwen (1984)

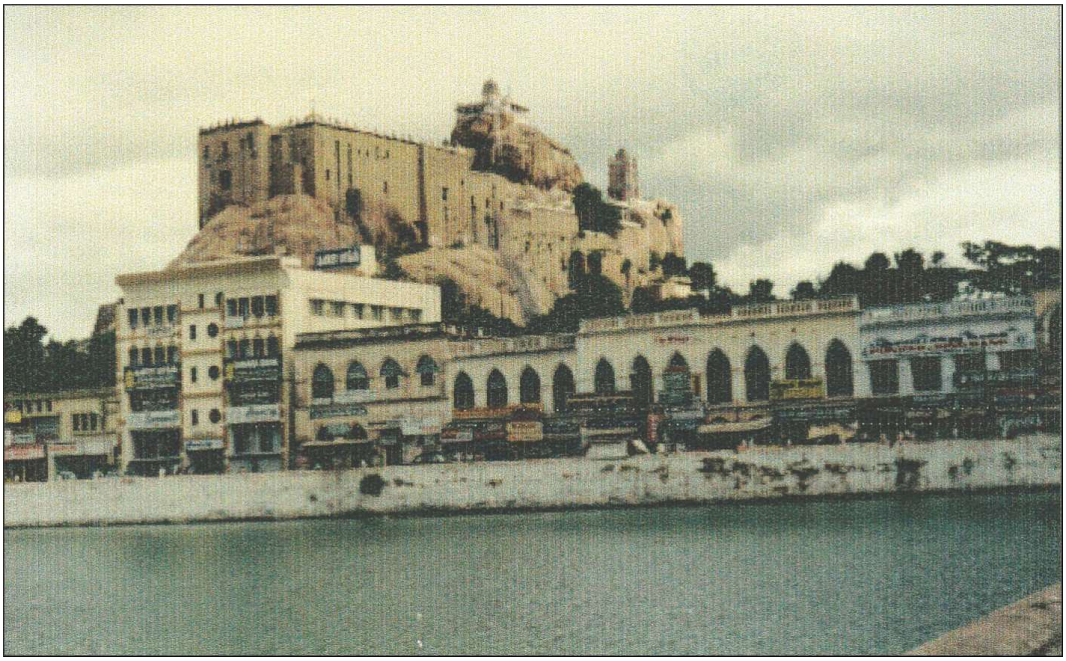
Len died in Hubli in 2007.

Robert Bertram Desmier

8th child of Bertrand Vincent Desmier & Ilene

Robert was born in Madura in 1938. He also worked on the railways before he immigrated to England in 1961. In 1967 he married Adelaide Dawn Rosario and they had two children Ian and Gaile. Robert died in SW London in 2015.

Group photo of the descendants of Bertrand and Ilene Desmier
L to R: Leonard, Joseph, Ronald, Cyril and in front Iris



The Rock Fort at Trichonopoly, a dominating landmark in the city.
Source: Eugene Desmier (1990's)

Chapter 22

CYRIL ANDREW DESMIER

AND
MARY THERESE FERNANDEZ

Cyril Andrew Desmier (1 Jul 1900-28 May 1965)
m. 14 May 1930 Mary Therese Fernandez (7 Oct 1908-Sep 1995)
Douglas G Desmier (b. 8 Apr 1931)
m. 6 Jan 1958 Pamela Margaret Fernandez (9 Jul 1932-5 August 2007)
Lindsay Desmier
Jennifer Desmier
m. Antonio Febbraro
Caroline Desmier
m. Paola Boscorato
Mark Desmier
Celine A Desmier (b. 29 Apr 1932)
m. 22 May 1957 Christopher Cooper (22 Dec 1927-17 march 2017)
Bernadine Cooper
Lorraine Cooper
m. Jan Grozdanovic
Eugene Cooper
m. Denise Doody
Neville A Desmier (b. 12 Apr 1934)
m. 2 Apr 1961 Barbara M Donoghue (b. 10 Oct 1937)
Marie B Desmier
m. Perry Bullard
Lewie Desmier
m. Yuki -
Rose Desmier
Glen Desmier
Michelle Desmier
Gillian Desmier
Malcolm Thomas Desmier (16 Jun 1935-25 Feb 2018)
m. 4 Aug 1964 Barbara French (4 Mar 1942-31 july 2012)
Neil Desmier
m. Tracey C Jones
Kevin T Desmier
m. Jayne Sandrey
Corrine Desmier
m. Michael J Turner
Anita Desmier
Eugene Ignatius Desmier (16 Jul 1937-31 May 2020)
m. 15 Jul 1967 Gwendoline P. Desmier (b. 17 Apr 1939)
Richard A Desmier
m. Emma P Dodsworth
Helen Desmier
Shirley P Desmier (b. 9 Feb 1939)
m. 9 Aug 1966 Adrian J Donoghue (b. 21 May 1941)
Brian Donaghue
Alastair Donaghue
Nigel Donaghue
m. Samantha Potter
Darryl Donaghue
Noel J Desmier (b. 8 Dec 1940)
m. Teresa D Desmier
Sonia Desmier
Jude Desmier (26 May 1945-26 May 1945)
Julian A Desmier
m. Heather Hathaway
Alain Desmier
Jeanine Desmier
Natalie Desmier

Most of the information and photographs in this chapter was sent to me by Cyril's fourth son Eugene.

Cyril Andrew Desmier

5th child of Thomas Alfred Desmier & Mary

From Eugene

Cyril was born in Trichinopoly in 1900. He studied at St Joseph's high school as a day scholar. The family lived in Kempstown, a little village on the outskirts of Trichy. On leaving school, like most of his relatives and Friends he joined the South Indian Railway, initially doing temporary work. Soon he got

a permanent appointment as a Fireman at the Loco shed and that started his long career with the railways. Little did he know when he joined that day that 29 years later he would return to the same Loco shed as the foreman in charge of it. From a fireman to an engine driver, you progressed through the various grades, initially driving goods trains, then passenger trains, and finally, every engine drivers dream, driving the crack express trains. At the age of 30, Cyril married a school teacher, Mary Teresa Fernandez (1930, St Mary's Cathedral). By a strange coincidence Cyril's mother's maiden name was also Mary Teresa Fernandez. Mary Theresa was from a very religious and devout Roman Catholic family. The mother took a very active part in the church, organising and raising much-needed funds for charities. Her brother, Monsignor Joss Fernandez, was the Superior General of the Indian Missionary Society and many of her cousins joined the priesthood and other religious orders such as the Franciscans and the Apostolic Carmelite order. Mary Teresa was a very talented and hard-working person. She played the guitar and piano and was very good at embroidery and dressmaking, a skill inherited from her father who owned a tailoring business in Tellicherry on the West Coast. She was also a painter, painting with oil paints, and had a flair for making artificial flowers using crepe paper which she used to wax to enhance their appearance.

Although Cyril had no University qualifications he was always eager to study, was well-disciplined and was hard-working. In spite of the long working hours he still found time to study through correspondence courses. He soon became a Loco Inspector. Though this was a career move it was an upheaval for his family as most of his postings were short term assignments, to Villapuram, Madurai, Shoranur and Quilon. Rather than disrupt his children's education, the elder children were sent to boarding school at Tiruchirappalli whilst the younger one stayed with relatives.

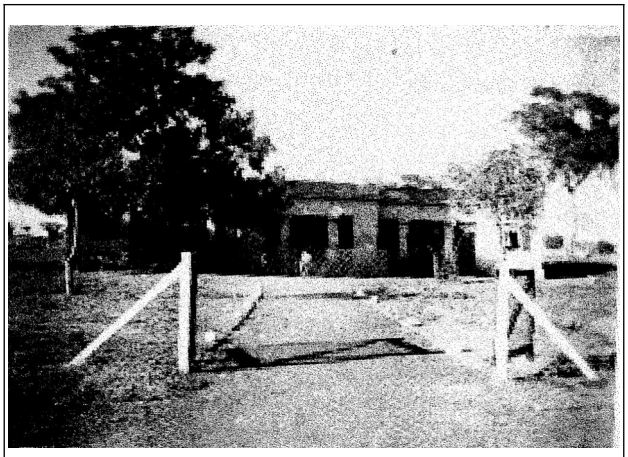
Cyril and Mary Wedding, Trichonopoly 1930

In 1947 Cyril return to Tiruchirapalli as the Loco Foreman and Engineer in charge of the Loco Shed. The loco-shed was one of the Central Service and maintenance depots in the south for both metre gauge and broad gauge steam locomotives. The Loco Shed was later expanded to maintain and service diesel trains. Cyril was also responsible for the introduction of the first diesel trains which ran between Tiruchirappalli and Karaikudu and Tiruchirappalli and Lalgudi.

Tiruchirappalli had a very large population of Anglo Indians. Apart from the Railway Headquarters, offices for the Transport, Traffic, Freight and Accounts Departments, the Customs, Police and Post and Telegraph Offices were also located there. The railwayman's club, better known as the Railway Institute was the place where it's members used to meet to enjoy a game of snooker, tennis, badminton etc. or just relax and unwind after a days work. It was also the venue for weddings dances and Christmas functions. Cyril was the Honorary Secretary for the Railway Institute, he was also the secretary for the Trichonopoly branch of the All India Anglo-Indian Association.

On 30th of June 1945 Cyril retired from the railways after a successful career spanning 37 years. Having had to vacate his railway quarters, he bought his own house and continued to live in Trichy. In July 1962 he immigrated to the UK with his family to join his two sons Neville_and Malcolm who

came to the UK the previous year. He lived in Barnes for a year, and then settled into his own home in Wimbledon Park. He died in May 1965 and was buried in the Merton and Morden cemetery, Surrey.



Cyril Desmier's home in Trichonopoly where the family grew up

Cyril and Mary had eight children that lived to adulthood and all immigrated to England.

Douglas G Desmier

1st child of Cyril Andrew Desmier & Mary

Douglas was born in 1931 in Trichy. he went to Campion High School as a boarder as his father was posted to different locations around southern India with the railways. In his schooldays he was a keen sportsman and excelled in track and field events. He also played hockey for the Southern Railway where he worked as a Travelling Ticket Inspector. In 1958 he married Pamela Fernandez in Trichy. In 1960 he immigrated to the UK with Pamela and their son Lindsay. In England a further three children, Jennifer, Caroline and Mark were born. On arrival in the UK he joined British Railways where he worked until retirement. Doug and Pam lived in Surrey. Pam died in Raynes Park, Surrey in 2007.

Celine Desmier

2nd child of Cyril Andrew Desmier & Mary

Celine Desmier with her son Eugene and his wife and her husband Christopher (Jack)

Celine (born Trichinopoly 1932), was educated at Holy Cross Convent, Trichinopoly. She trained as a school teacher at St. Teresa's Training college, Cannanore and subsequently taught in schools in Madras and her brothers' old school in Trichinopoly. She married Christopher Cooper (known as Jack) at St.Mary's, Trichy in 1957. They had three children, Eugene, Bernadine and Lorraine and in 1962 they all immigrated to England. In England Celine worked for British Telecom, Accounts Department and Jack worked for British Railways. Jack died in Wimbledon in 2017.

Campion High School. Trichonopoly. All of Cyril Desmier's sons studied here and his daughter, Celine, later taught there

Neville A Desmier

3rd child of Cyril Andrew Desmier & Mary

Neville (born Trichinopoly 1934) also went to Campion High School and subsequently graduated with a B.Sc. from St. Joseph's College in Trichy. Neville was a keen sportsman and captained the University hockey team. After university he undertook an engineering apprenticeship with the Indian Railways. In 1959, Neville and his younger brother immigrated to England together. The following year he married Barbara Donaghue at St. Osmund's Church, Barnes. Neville worked for the Atomic Energy Authority and then moved to the petrochemical industry until retirement. They had six children, Marie Lewie, Rose, Glen, Michelle and Gillian.

Malcolm Desmier

4th child of Cyril Andrew Desmier & Mary

Malcolm (born Trichinopoly 1935) went to Campion High School. On leaving school, he undertook an engineering apprenticeship at the Central Railway workshops, Golden Rock. In his spare time he took up weightlifting and bodybuilding and won some trophies.

After completing his apprenticeship Malcolm was appointed as a train examiner and posted to Madurai and then Trichinopoly where he took charge of the Freight section of rolling stock. In August 1959 Malcolm immigrated to the UK with elder brother Neville. In 1964 he married Barbara French at Christ the King Church,

Malcolm Desmier with Barbara at the wedding of their eldest son Neil and his wife, Tracey

Wimbledon Park. While working for British Rail he attended night school where he attained engineering and management qualifications and eventually went into the Motor Industry in Wales, first with Leyland Motors and finally with the Ford Motor Corporation. In 1993 Ford forced everyone over 55 years to take early retirement and he retired as a Senior Manufacturing Engineer. Due to his wife Barbara's health he contemplated moving to Spain and after considerable research moved to Spain in 2002 to Torrevieja where they lived for two years and then moved to San Fulgencio. Malcolm enjoyed playing golf and Barbara enjoyed the company of many ladies clubs. They had four children. Neil, Kevin, Corrinne and Anita.

Barbara died in 2012 and Malcom in 2018.after returning to live in Stevenage, Hertfordshire.

Eugene Ignatius Desmier

5th child of Cyril Andrew Desmier & Mary

Eugene Desmier (born Trichinopoly 1937) went to Technical College after attending Campion High School like his brothers. He then worked for Southem Railways at their Headquarters in Madras. He immigrated to the UK in 1960 with his parents and worked for British Railways in the Chief Signal and Telecommunications Engineer's Design Office. Eight years later he moved to British Petroleum Company in the Electrical Engineering Department and then later transferred to their Chemicals Division as a Project Co-ordinator, a job that required him to travel to Europe the Middle East and India.

Eugene and Gwen Desmier with Helen and Richard

In July 1967 Eugene married his second cousin Gwen Desmier (daughter of Terence and Phyllis Desmier, chapter 16) at Christ the King's RC Church, Wimbledon Park. They had two children Richard and Helen.

Shirley P Desmier

6th child of Cyril Andrew Desmier & Mary

Shirley was born in Trichinopoly in 1939. She was educated at Holy Cross Convent, completing her final year at St. John's Vestry School, also in Trichinopoly. On leaving school she wanted to be a school teacher and enrolled at the Church Park Teacher's Training College, Madras, where she took her final exams. On completion of her training, she taught at the Good Shepherd Convent, Madras. In July 1960, she immigrated to the UK with her parents. Shirley married Adrian Donaghue in 1966 at Christ the King's RC Church, Wimbledon Park, Surrey. She continued her teaching career in the UK, taking a break when she started her family and went back to teaching once her family had grown up. She retired as Manager of the

Shirley Desmier & Adrian

Early Years Unit at St. Teresa's Primary School, Morden, Surrey. They have four children. Brian, Alastair, Nigel and Darryl.

Noel J Desmier

7th child of Cyril Andrew Desmier & Mary

Noel (born Trichy 1940) also went to Campion High School. He left India to study in Germany and moved to London in 1960 to work for the Civil Service in Tax Law and later as a policy advisor. He married his second cousin (and sister of his brother Eugene's wife) Teresa Desmier in 1968 at Christ the King's RC Church, Wimbledon Park (chapter 16). They had one daughter Sonia.

Noel and Teresa with daughter, Sonia

Jude Desmier

8th child of Cyril Andrew Desmier & Mary

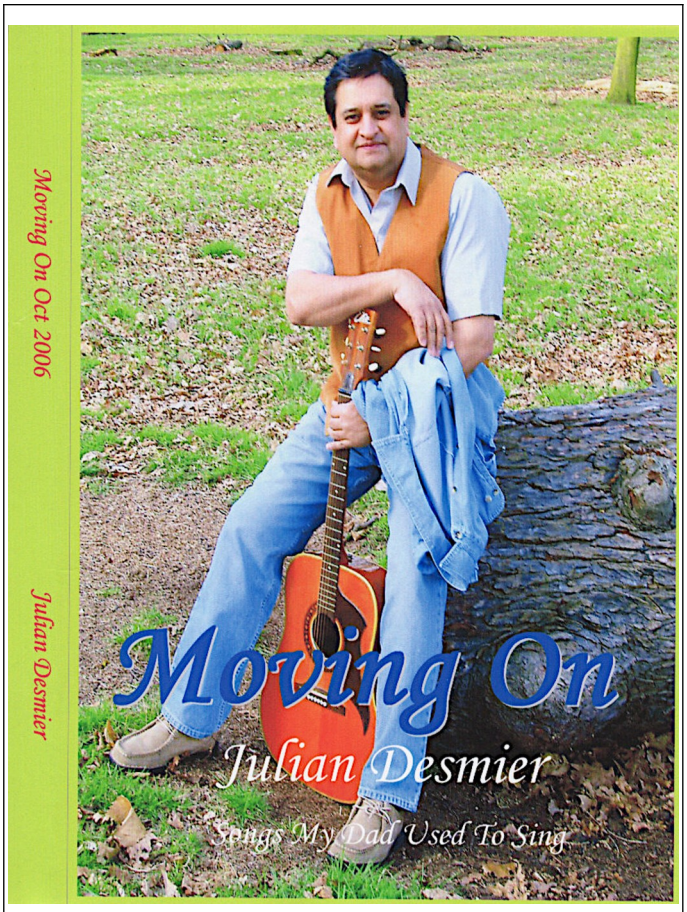
Jude, born in Trichinopoly in 1945 died shortly after birth.

Julian A Desmier

9th child of Cyril Andrew Desmier & Mary

Julian, the youngest of the family, was born in Trichinopoly and came over to the UK with his parents in 1960, at the age of 12. He studied at Queen's Road School, Wimbledon where he took a keen interest in sport, representing his school at the Junior Surrey Championships. On leaving school he specialised in electronics and worked for himself as an electronics consultant /engineer. In 1981, he married Heather Hathaway at the Sacred Heart Church, Wimbledon. Heather was a teacher and taught French and Latin at UK's largest Preparatory School, at Danes Hill, Surrey.

Julian and Heather had three children Alain and identical twin sisters, Jeannine and Natalie. Julian enjoys music and still finds time to gig with his band at the weekends.



Julian Desmier on a CD cover of one of his albums

Chapter 23

DNA CONFIRMATION OF SOME FAMILY LINES

Introduction

This is a greatly simplified summary about using DNA test results in genealogy. For a more accurate and comprehensive explanation I recommend reading the following reference book Bettinger, B.T. The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy, 2019 ISBN:9781440300578

DNA genealogical tests can be used to confirm biological relationships with other people by comparing the DNA of two or more individuals. An autosomal DNA test is now considered to be an essential tool to use in family history research. Whilst the test results will not directly give you the names of your ancestors, by comparing the results of your test analysis with those of others people it can indicate that you share a common ancestor. This can lead to you looking at other traditional record sources that you may not have examined in order to put a name to the common ancestor. An example of this is that I was able to find the ancestry of my maternal great-grandmother whose father immigrated to the USA after his partner died following the birth of my great-grandmother who was informally adopted in Scotland.

The three main DNA testing companies are Ancestry, My Heritage and FTDNA. When you get your DNA test results back from a testing company the two things that people are first interested in are their ethnicity report and their match list.

My Ethnicity Results

Ancestry has suggested that I have inherited the following ethnicity from my parents (rounded).

Region	Maternal %	Paternal %	Me
Scotland	3	14	17
England & NW Europe	38	5	43
Southern India	0	19	19
South W. India	0	4	4
Central Asia – South	0	3	3
Ireland	6	3	9
Germanic Europe	0	2	2
S Italy& Mediterranean	0	1	1
Spain	3	2	5

Focusing on my paternal results, I cannot explain the Scottish or Irish ethnicity. I think that British would be a more appropriate description in my case and that this ethnicity links back many generations. When compared to my results from just nine months ago my Danish ancestry was 4% but it has now disappeared and been replaced by Spain (2%), southern Italy (1%) and Germanic Europe (2%). Similarly my Iran and Persian ancestry (1%) has also disappeared..

My Heritage does not distinguish between maternal or paternal inherited ethnicity and uses different regional categories They estimate that I have inherited 20.2% South Asian; 3% Ashkenazi Jewish; 40.5% Irish, Scottish & Welsh and 36.3% North & West European.

FTDNA also does not separate parental ethnicity. They suggest 77% England, Wales & Scotland; 3% Ireland; Greece & Balkans 5% and India 14%.

All of the testing companies emphasise that the ethnicity results are an estimate and they will frequently revise estimates as they get more representative sample data for different regions. They have more confidence in comparing results from different continents than, for example, different regions of Great Britain or European countries. My main conclusion from my results from the different testing companies is that I have significant components of Indian and European ethnicity!

DNA Matches

DNA matches are the result of your DNA data being compared to other people's DNA data to identify matching segments of chromosomes. A match indicates a family relationship between you and the person who you match with. To determine who the most recent common ancestor couple (MRCC) are in each case requires a comparison of your family tree with that of the match and then confirming that both trees are correct by hunting down the supporting documentation such as birth, marriage etc records.

Ancestry is currently by far the largest DNA test company and so people generally get more matches from a test with that company. The other large companies that do DNA tests are My Heritage (MYH) and Family Tree DNA (FTDNA). It is possible to download your raw DNA test result file from Ancestry and upload it to MYH and FTDNA and for a fee (much less than taking a second test with them) access their analysis tools and match list. Raw data can also be uploaded to the Gedmatch site that provide access to some analysis tools free of charge.

Ancestry is helpful in that with a lot of your match list results they indicate if the match in question is related to your father's or mother's ancestors. They also have a tool called Thrulines which compares your family tree with that of each match for you and can suggest how you may be related. It is always necessary to confirm that the suggestion is correct by searching for supporting documents, however. Failure to do this could result in a misinterpretation of the relationship as many online family trees have errors.

A person inherits close to 50% of DNA from each of their parents. It does not follow, however, that the 50% you inherit from your father, for example, is made up of half from your paternal grandmother and half from your paternal grandfather as in each generation the DNA is mixed and recombined. The strength of a DNA match is measured in centimorgans (cM). Each person has about 6,800 centimorgans. Indicative amounts of DNA shared with different level cousins are published widely on the internet and used by the testing companies to give a guide to how people are related to their matches. The website, DNA Painter, gives the range and average value for many relationships. I have reproduced some of them here.

Relationship	Range	Average value
cousin	centimorgams (cM)	
1st	396 – 1397	866
2nd	41 – 592	229
3rd	0 – 234	73
4th	0 - 139	35
5th	0 – 117	25

Likely range of inherited DNA source: DNA Painter website (01/2024)

All inherited human DNA can be plotted on a chromosome map. We inherit 23 pairs of chromosomes from our parents. One set of 23 from our mother and the other set from our father. The 23rd or *x* chromosome determines the sex of the child as you can only inherit an *x* chromosome from your mother but can inherit either an *x* or a *y* chromosome from your father. If you inherit two *x* chromosomes you are female. If you inherit an *x* and a *y* chromosome from your parents you are male. The *x* chromosome can be used differently to help determine ancestry as a mother can only pass on an *x* chromosome to a child.

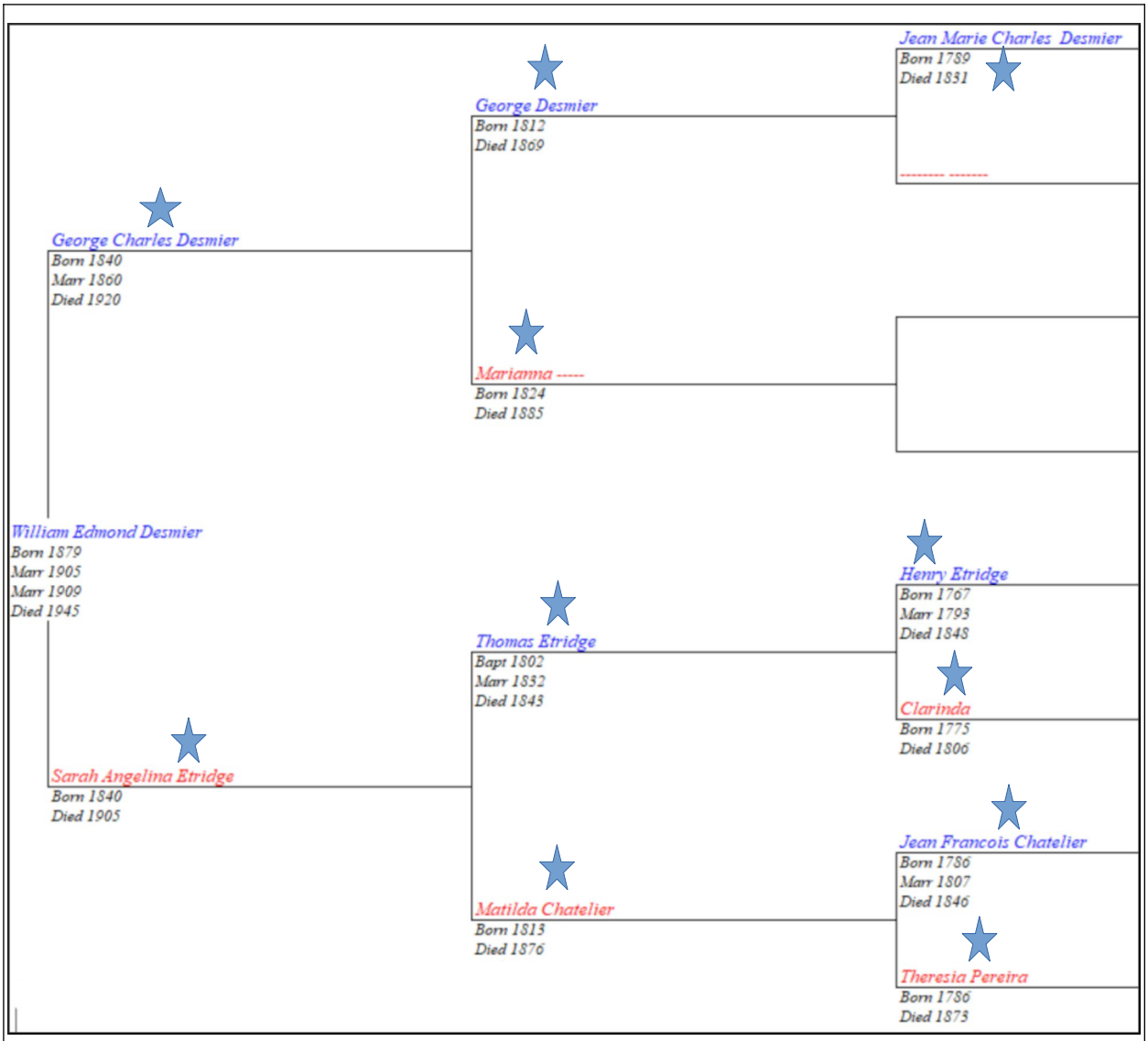
All DNA test companies provide you with an estimate of your ethnicity which they determine by comparing your DNA results with their representative DNA results that they have collected from a large range of locations all over the world. These ethnicity estimates are not considered to be anything more than estimates. They are, however, useful in, identifying where some DNA has been inherited from different continents. In our case, for example, predominantly European with some Indian inheritance.

The table below is a summary of my DNA matches on the Desmier side of my family so far. I have only included the matches that I have confirmed by finding corresponding vital records (except some for first and second generation birth data in some cases due to privacy reasons as they are still living).

The chart shows the ancestry of my grandfather, William Edmond Desmier and shows (starred) the lines of descendancy that are supported by DNA matching.

Num	Match Name	atDNA	My Ancestor	Matches Ancestor	Most Recent Common Ancestor/couple	test co.	Relationship to me
101	Desmier, John Andrew	975	Desmier/Earle	EW Desmier	Desmier/Earle	A	1C
107	Desmier, Lee Eric Andrew	638	Desmier/Earle	EW Desmier	Desmier/Earle	A	1C1R
111	Desmier, Arielle	565	Desmier/Earle	EW Desmier	Desmier/Earle	A	1C1R
249	Devall, Robert	154	Desmier/Etridge	GTE Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	A	2C1R
326	Edwinson, Natalie Kay	209	Desmier/Etridge	GTE Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	A	2C1R
350	Edwinson, Glen	216	Desmier/Etridge	GTE Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	A	2C1R
958	Desmier, Eric William Anakin	277	Desmier/Earle	John Desmier	Desmier/Earle	A	1C2R
971	Kinnersley, Desmond Dermot	30	Desmier/Marianna	Leonora Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	A	3C
1761	Pearce, Lianne Francis	52	Desmier/Marianna	Eliza Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	A	3C
2476	Fuller-Gee, Michael James	154	Desmier/Etridge	Arthur Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	M	2C1R
2484	Rogers, Cameron	57	Desmier/Etridge	Regina Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	AF	2C2R
2492	Rogers, Neville	76	Desmier/Etridge	Regina Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	M	2C1R
2750	Barry, Martin	15	Desmier/Marianna	Charlotte Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	F	3C1R
2752	Rourke, Mary-Ann	68	Desmier/Marianna	Leonora & Eliza Desm	Desmier/Marianna	A	3C
2754	Rourke, Robert John	49	Desmier/Marianna	Leonora Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	A	3C
2755	Rourke, Simon Mark	12	Desmier/Marianna	Leonora & Eliza Desm	Desmier/Marianna	F	3C1R
2758	Mogose, Christine	30	Desmier/Marianna	Charlotte Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	F	3C1R
2760	Mogose, Stephen	39	Desmier/Marianna	Charlotte Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	M	3C1R
2878	Rayner, Patricia J	31	Chatelier/Periera	Adolphus Chatelier	Chatelier/Periera	M	4C2R
2948	Rebello, Michelle	20	Jean MC Desmier	Frederick Desmier	Jean MC Desmier	A	4C1R
3013	Kirby, Denise	140	Desmier/Etridge	Mabel M Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	M	2C1R
3052	Jessop, Laraine Anne	145	Desmier/Etridge +	Alice Desmier +	Desmier/Etridge & marianna	A	2C1R/3C1R
3065	Gulley, Virginia E	36	Desmier/Marianna	Leonora Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	A	3C1R
3074	Giallo, Alexander M	49	Desmier/Etridge	regina Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	A	2C3R
3075	Rogers, Benjamin James	18	Desmier/Etridge	Regina Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	A	2C3R
3368	James, Jean Carol	20	Chatelier/Periera	Eugene Chatelier	Chatelier/Periera	M	4C2R
3370	James, Michael Godfrey	20	Chatelier/Periera	Eugene Chatelier	Chatelier/Periera	AG	4C2R
3371	Mogose, Wendy	30	Desmier/Marianna	Charlotte Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	M	3C1R
3398	Ashford, Derek	121	Desmier/Etridge	GTE Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	A	2C1R
3489	Sales, Reginald	14	Desmier/Marianna	Charlotte Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	A	3C1R
3490	Holt, Monica	13	Desmier/Marianna	Charlotte Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	A	3C2R
3511	Kilcoyne, Colleen Ann	10	Etridge/Clarinda	Caroline Etridge	Etridge/Clarinda	A	4C1R
3536	Rossett, Annette Margaret	29	Etridge/Chatelier	Charlotte Etridge	Etridge/Chatelier	A	3C3R
3704	C3yrne	23	Etridge/Chatelier	Charlotte Etridge	Etridge/Chatelier	A	3C2R
3721	Daxman22	11	Chatelier/Periera	Adolphus Chatelier	Chatelier/Periera	A	4C2R
3733	Wooten, Gary	56.4	Chatelier/Periera	Eugene Chatelier	Chatelier/Periera	M	4C
3736	Jahans, Peter Charles	39	Desmier/Marianna	Eliza Desmier	Desmier/Marianna	F	3C
3810	Jordan, Clint	56	Desmier/Etridge	Charlotte Desmier	Desmier/Etridge	M	3C1R
3829	MacDonald, KIm	14	Chatelier/Pereira	Eugene Chatelier	Chatelier/Pereira	A	4C2R
3861	Tomlinson, Carl	122	Desmier/Etridge	Alice Desmier	Desmier/Etridge & marianna	A	2C2R/3C1R
3862	Tomlinson, Matthew	27	Desmier/Etridge	Alice Desmier	Desmier/Etridge & marianna	A	2C3R+
3891	Chatelier, Catherine Murray Wilson	24	Chatelier/Pereira	Eugene Chatelier	Chatelier/Pereira	A	4C

Table of confirmed DNA matches with me on my paternal grandfather's (Desmier) side of my family



Ancestors of William Edmond Desmier
Stars indicate those ancestors that are confirmed DNA matches to me (February 2025)

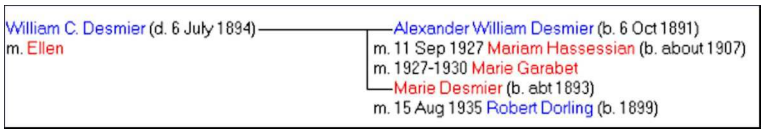
CHAPTER 24

UNATTACHED FAMILIES

This is the section where I have placed those individuals and family groups that cannot be convincingly assumed to be part of any of the previously mentioned family groups. In each case the information uncovered to date is limited. Since the first published edition I have been able to place several names/families but several still remsin unknown to me.

Maria Desmier

A Maria Desmier is named as the Godmother of Agnes Desmier (daughter of George Desmier) in 1851 in Hyderabad. I have not identifed anyone named Maria around this timeframe.


William C. Desmier (d. 6 July 1894)
m. Ellen
Alexander William Desmier (b. 6 Oct 1891)
m. 11 Sep 1927 Mariam Hassessian (b. about 1907)
m. 1927-1930 Marie Garabet
Marie Desmier (b. abt 1893)
m. 15 Aug 1935 Robert Dorling (b. 1899)

William Christopher Adolphus Desmier

William's full name was found on the transcription of his daughter's marriage in Baghdad, Iraq. His wife's name, Ellen is mentioned on the extract of his son's baptism.William's career as an apothecary (a medical occupation above a nurse but below a surgeon) can be followed in a combined register of employees of the East India Company available on the Ancestry website. In 1882 he was listed as an apothecary, 2nd class (W Desmuir). In 1887 as an assistant apothecary 2nd grade (W Desmire). In 1890 he was apothecary on board the steamer *Comet* (W Desmire). In 1894 his death was recorded as 2nd class assistant surgeon WCA Desmire, Persian Gulf.

His son Alexander was born in 1891 in Devlali about 250 km east of Bombay. William's occupation was recorded as an assistant apothecary. In 1927, 36 year old Alexander married 20 year old Mariam Hassessian in the Latin church, Baghdad, Iraq. Alexander's occupation was recorded as 'Clerk at Chauvain's'. There is a second marriage transcription for Alexander to Marie Garabet, also in Baghdad but the year is vague (1926-1930).

There is a marriage extract for a Marie Desmier to Robert Dorling a doctor in 1925 in Baghdad. The information on the extract for the marriage indicates that Marie was born in 1896, this is in conflict with her father's death date but she may have being a bit vain about her age or the transcription/extract is in error (or even could be a different person).

William Desmier

William is mentioned on the death extract of his five year old daughter Mary in 1895. Mary was buried at the St Andrew's church Vepery, Madras. On the extract it is stated that William Desmier was a distiller at the crown distillery.

Infant Desmier

An announcement in the Bombay Times & Journal of Commerce (1840) stated that a son was born to Mrs J Desmier of Calicut. This could refer to either a son or a grandson of John Charles Desmier.

Teresa Celina Desmier

A transcription (FMP) states she was born in 1928 in Negapatam, Madras Presidency. No further information recorded.

Berneath Joyceive Desmier

An FMP transcription shows she was born and baptised in Villapuram, Madras in 1926. Nothing further found

Georges Hubert Desmier

A Georges Hubert Desmier, the son of Georges Hubert Desmier, a railway inspector of Trichinopoly and his wife Mary was buried at age four months in 1892 when he died of diarrhoea.

Clement Desmier

There is a burial extract for Clement Desmier a 21 year old worker for the Norther Army Canteen Board in Murree. This suggests he was born about 1901. He died of Cholycystitis.

Edward Desmier

In the Times of India (21 Aug 1885) there is a report that Edward, Henry Wilson and two others went to the house of a Mr George Rogers and caused damage to his property (location not mentioned but probably Bombay). It seems that the dispute was over the fact that a Miss Jessie Wilson was staying at the house of the Mr Rogers against the will of her mother. There was more about the case but the outcome for Edward was a sentence of 14 days and a fine of 20Rs. I can't attach him to any family.

APPENDIX

VALE BOB GIBBS B.E.M.

First published in the Knaresborough Press (Author Alan Hemsworth)

The world will be a sadder and a less interesting place for the passing of Bob Gibbs at the age of 89. Bob was a genuine character to match Blind Jack or any other of Knaresborough's many characters.

Bob was born in Hong Kong in 1916. He grew up in India in the days of the British Raj. He came to England with his younger brother in 1926 (his mother and sister followed a year or two later) to attend an English boarding school and he eventually arrived in Knaresborough via Surrey, Bradford and Normanton, a Japanese prisoner of war camp and Korea.

Although he worked on the railway before the war and could have sat out the Second World War in a reserve occupation he volunteered for the forces as soon as war was declared.

He was eventually posted to Hong Kong where he was captured by the Japanese in December 1941. He was transported to the Japanese mainland to various prison camps and at one stage had to work as a stevedore in docks unloading rice, coal and metals. Throughout the four years of hardship in captivity he still had an eye for beauty. During his time as a prisoner of war he first saw and grew to love Mount Fuji and cherry blossom. Having spent four years in captivity, Bob then served in the Korean War. Never one to miss an opportunity he even managed a trip to Mount Fuji before returning to England.

After leaving the forces, he trained as a games, geography and later a maths teacher. He taught at Christchurch in Harrogate, Boroughbridge Secondary Modern School and from 1971 until his retirement in 1978 at King James's School, Knaresborough. He had a genuine interest in pupils in his charge. Even years after having a particular class he would enquire after a pupil. 'Is he/she doing ok?'

Bob was a keen sportsman with an enduring love of walking (both fell walking and competitive road walking for which he won several medals), cricket (despite coming to Yorkshire via Surrey he was a passionate supporter of Yorkshire County Cricket Club) and golf. He was for many years a leading figure in local schools athletics.

On retirement, Bob travelled to every continent. His daughter Margaret remembers one occasion when Bob (aged about 80) was told off by his Aunt (aged 98) for sleeping rough in Africa! He crossed the Nullarbor Plain in Australia by bus (a journey of three or four days), he travelled from Calgary to California by Greyhound coach, he travelled the length of South America, running into Shining Path guerrillas on the way. He visited Russia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, the Galapagos Islands, Kenya, the Kalahari Desert, Borneo, China, India and Pakistan. A few years ago he even returned to Japan for a ride on the bullet train and to see his beloved Mount Fuji again. Take a tip from Bob and visit Chile or failing that the English Lake District.

How typical of Bob to die not in a nursing home unable to look after himself but on February 27 on a holiday in Tenerife (three and a half weeks into a four week winter break in the sunshine). He got value for money even on this last holiday!

A courageous and spirited man who kept going to the end, Bob leaves a daughter (Margaret) and son-in-law (Richard) and many friends and acquaintances in Knaresborough and all over the world.

REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adam Matthew digital early 18th century journals. A website that can be accessed through many public libraries that has searchable links to early publications such as the Bombay Courier or the Ceylon Gazette. https://www.amdigital.co.uk/

Ancestry Subscription database Https://Ancestry.com. Useful mainly for records other than in India. There are some transcriptions of Indian records and the site has recently added some directories relevant to British India.

Anglo-Burmese Library A website devoted to preserving information about colonial era Burma and the survivors and casualties of the events there during WWII. https://www.angloburmeselibrary.com/

Archive.org Https://archive.org A website that provides access to many old books, gazetteers, directories and manuscripts.

Asiatic Journal, 1840 *Asiatic Journal* and Monthly Register for British and Foreign India, China and Australasia, Volume 33 page 234. Accessed through Google Books.

Bombay Almanack and Directory 1864 page 824 list of Bombay inhabitants lists Charles, George, Robert & Theophilus Desmier and their occupations. This and other editions can be accessed through the Internet Archive (Archive.org)

Bengal Directory An annual listing of Europeans in India and their occupations from 1823-1842. Listings are variable but may give a clue to occupations and their movements from year to year.

East India Register & Directory Similar to the Bengal Directory but dates are earlier.

British Library. Most of the paperwork generated by the East India Company and the British government of India prior to independence in 1947 that has been retained is stored in the India office records collection at the British Library. This is the source of indexes and copies of originals that have been microfilmed or digitised by others such as the LDS church, FindMyPast and Ancestry. There is much more information than what has been digitised. Https://bl.uk

FamilySearch Database of the Church of Latter-day Saints https://www.familysearch.org Indexes for many records of events all over the world including India. Original documents may also be downloaded from their family history centres. https://www.familysearch.org/search/

Families in British India Society (FIBIS) Https://www.fibis.org Access to databases of British people that were in India as well as links to other sources of family history information. Highly recommended as a starting place for anyone wanting to do their own research

Find My Past (FMP) Subscription database A source in particular for copies of ecclesiastical returns from British India, Wills of British in India and searchable copies old Indian newspapers. https://www.findmypast.com.au/

Geopatronyme, (2019) Now managed by Filae, (part of My Heritage) a site that tries to answer all questions about French surnames archimag.com

Google Books Like archive.org provides access to many out of copyright directories and gazetteers eg. The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany, Thackers Indian Directory Https://books.google.com

IMDB, International Movie Database https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0374974/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1 accessed August 2024. An entry about Helen Richardson/Desmier listing her films and links to further documentaries about her.

Indian Railways Fan Club A website with a lot of information on the history of railways in India. https://irfca.org/

Kabristan Archives. A website concerned with preserving genealogical records from Ceylon, India and Ireland. https://www.kabristan.org.uk/about-us

Pondicherry (1790, 1792) Records of the Superior Council of Pondicherry, accessed using https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k58462277.r=.langPT.textePage (2024)

The Hindoo Patriot 13 February 1882 Accessed through the Internet Archive (Archive.org)

Wikipedia (2024) The free online encyclopaedia has a page on Helen https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_(actress)

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